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ESSAYS

ON

THE EVIDENCES, DOCTRINES, AND PRACTICAL OPERATION,

OF

CHRISTIANITY;

BY JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY

ΕΝ ΤΟΥΤΟΙΣ ΙΣΘΙ. 1 Tim iv

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PREFACE.

THE subject of Christianity—a subject of infinite interest and importance — appears to admit of a natural division into three parts : *first*, the evidences on which is established the divine authority both of our religion itself and of those sacred writings in which it is recorded : *secondly*, the doctrines revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and constituting the great *system* of divine truth : *thirdly*, the practical principles, through the operation of which, in the soul, the Gospel of Jesus Christ produces for mankind its legitimate results—righteousness here, and eternal happiness hereafter.

Such is the order in which the subject is treated, in the volume now presented to the attention of the public.

The first four Essays of the work will be found to contain a brief, elementary, statement of the principal evidences, which prove the fundamental proposition, *that Christianity is the religion of God.* My argument, under this head, relates, *first*, to the genuineness of the New Testament ; *secondly*, to its truth or authenticity ; *thirdly*, to the miracles of Jesus Christ and his apostles, considered as a divine attestation of the revelation which they accompanied ; *fourthly*, to the prophecies by which that revelation is also attested ; and *fifthly*, to the internal evidences of Christianity, and to its actual moral effects.

The proposition, that Christianity is the religion of God, may be established on the ground of genuineness and authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, in-

dependently of the fact, that they were given by inspiration. But since we cannot avail ourselves, with a sufficient degree of confidence, of the truths revealed to us in Scripture, unless we are convinced that the Bible itself is also of divine origin, I have devoted a fifth Essay to an argument in proof of that point.

When we have satisfied ourselves of the divine origin both of Christianity itself and of the Christian Scriptures, we are in possession of a clear ground for the examination and reception of the declarations of Holy Writ respecting those various doctrines which may be described as forming the essential frame-work of our holy religion. These relate to the Supreme Being and his natural and moral attributes—to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, who constitute the mysterious union of the godhead—to the spiritual adversary—to the constitution, character, condition, responsibilities, and prospects, of man—to the Lord Jesus, in his character and office of Messiah—and lastly, to our redemption, through the blood and righteousness of Christ, and through the influence and operation of the Holy Spirit.

These doctrines form the respective subjects of six distinct Essays. In discussing them, I have studiously endeavoured to avoid all assumption of a *wisdom* "*above that which is written.*" My only object has been to adduce the declarations of Scripture on each particular doctrine, in such a manner, and in such an order, as might be best calculated to leave on the mind of the reader a clear and satisfactory impression.

Although the six Essays now alluded to are, in the main, purely doctrinal, it has been far indeed from my intention to insist on a religion of *mere notions*. Persuaded as I am of the vast importance of a right creed, I am, nevertheless, well aware that the whole scheme of Christianity is directed to *practical* ends; and that, as far as *we* are concerned, it is utterly unavailing, unless those ends are accomplished. In treating, therefore, of the several doctrines of our religion, it has often been my endeavour to

show in what manner they are calculated to affect our hearts and to influence our practice; and, above all, I have desired to promote, in the reader of these doctrinal disquisitions, a real love for our God and Saviour—in whom centre all the wisdom and knowledge, all the righteousness and strength, all the joy and hope of the true Christian.[1]

The twelfth Essay, however, which consists of two parts, more particularly explains the practical operation of Christianity, through the medium of faith and obedience—those principles of action in the human mind, without the exertion of which it is impossible for us to secure either our present regeneration or our future and eternal bliss.

Lastly, in the *Conclusion*, I have laid before the reader a rapid, general summary of the whole argument of the volume, and I have ventured to add the word of exhortation—that none may rest satisfied with viewing the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of men, at a distance, and through the medium of cold, unprofitable, speculation; but that all may really *come* to him as to their all-sufficient Redeemer, and thus experience for themselves that the Gospel of Christ is THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION!

Now, as the several successive parts of my subject are thus closely connected—as, indeed, a completely fair estimate of any one of these Essays cannot be formed without a survey of them all—I venture to prefer to my readers a very earnest request, that they would so far do me justice, as to bestow an attentive perusal on the *whole* of the work, and on each Essay *in its order*.

Throughout the present volume I have endeavoured to avoid the discussion of any of those points in religion which can with any reason be regarded as *peculiar* or

[1] The tenth Essay, which relates to the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, contains, in a concentrated form, the substance of a work, in which, as many of my friends are aware, I have been more or less engaged for several years. Believing that the Essay in question is quite as likely to be useful as its more elaborate and diffuse original, I have now no view of publishing any thing farther on this great subject, except a volume, already in part composed, of *Critical Dissertations*.

sectarian. I have considered it to be, on the present occasion, my sole duty to arrange and unfold the testimonies borne in Scripture to those *primary religious principles* which the generality of the Christian world unite, not merely in believing to be true, but in regarding as of *essential* importance to their present and everlasting welfare.

I must also beg leave to remark, that, as there is nothing which can be deemed sectarian in the subjects here brought forward, so I have not, in this volume, been writing as the representative of any particular class or denomination of Christians; but only explaining, as a member (I trust) of the CHURCH OF CHRIST, the result of my own investigations, and the course of my own deliberate religious convictions. Although I am much indebted to several of my friends, who have kindly examined and corrected this work, no one is responsible for any part of its contents except myself.

I am aware that, in not a few respects, the execution of my design in these Essays may justly be considered *defective.* But, amidst numerous avocations of a different nature, I have pursued the object with nearly as much assiduity as circumstances would allow; and I am no longer satisfied in withholding from others the result of my labours. Should those labours be, in any degree, blessed, to the farther diffusion among men of pure, evangelical truth, I shall have abundant cause of satisfaction and thankfulness.

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ESSAY I.

ON THE PROBABILITY OF A DIVINE REVELATION TO MANKIND, AND ON THE GENUINENESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE antecedent probability, that, during the course of his government over the world, God would bestow upon mankind a clear outward revelation respecting their nature, responsibility, and future prospects, and respecting that part of his own will and designs, with which they are particularly connected—or rather that he would renew that original revelation which we may suppose to have taken place when man was first created—is a point which will be disputed by no person of reflection, who takes a just view of the attributes of God, on the one hand, and of the spiritual wants of man, on the other. Since God is omnipotent, since he is also *holy* and *benevolent*,—lessons which we plainly learn from natural religion,—we may, in the first place, rest assured that he is able to reveal his truth to mankind; and, secondly, we may reasonably believe that he would actually do so, if, on a careful examination of the condition of man, we discover that such a revelation was necessary, in order to our being wise, virtuous, and happy.

Now, let any person of common sense and competent knowledge take a *broad, general*, view of this question, and decide upon it according to *facts*. Let him reflect on the moral and religious state of the ancient heathen nations. Let him examine the records of their absurd idolatry, and of their gross, yet allowed,

vices. Let him mark the steady continuance of this extreme degradation, in the midst of an astonishing progress, among some of them, in art, literature, and science. Let him trace, in the writings of the wisest of their philosophers themselves, a palpable ignorance of many important sentiments,—chiefly respecting the Deity—which modern infidels have borrowed from Christianity, and fear not to avow as their own. Let him then turn his attention to the heathenism of our own days, and bestow a few moments' thought on the excessive folly, the disgusting lasciviousness, and the insatiable thirst for blood, which are its principal features; and he will no longer deny the practical necessity, and therefore *the strong antecedent probability*, of a divine revelation. And yet, on a fair examination of the analogy of the known course of God's providence, he would be ready to allow that this antecedent probability by no means demanded such a sudden and irresistible effulgence of light as should preclude the exercise of inquiry and faith, or at once evangelize our whole species; but, rather, the simple introduction, into the world, of *divinely authorized knowledge*, which, although it might be partial in its commencement, and slow in its progress, should nevertheless operate in a sure, steady, and uniform manner—just like the little leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened.

Such precisely are the pretensions of Christianity. During the reign of Tiberius over the Roman empire, and while Pontius Pilate was Procurator of Judea—a period when the Jews were, from the coincidence of various signs, led to expect a messenger from heaven—there arose in that country a person of great wisdom, who was called Jesus Christ, or Jesus *the anointed one*. He was the founder of a system of religion, and professed to be commissioned by his heavenly Father, to promulgate a revelation of divine truth. He was followed by several disciples, and was put to death by his enemies; and, after his decease, his followers were extensively, and very successfully, engaged in propagating his religion, both among the

Jews and in the world at large. These are facts which the infidel is not accustomed to deny. Nor can they be disputed with the least appearance of reason, since they are tacitly recognized, incidentally alluded to, or expressly declared, not only by Christians, but by several heathen writers, and are, moreover, in the most substantial manner confirmed by a long course of remarkable events, to which they have given rise.

The history of this wonderful individual—of his birth, life, preaching, death, resurrection, and ascension—together with the whole doctrinal and moral system which he inculcated and established, are recorded in a single volume—the New Testament. This single volume, however, consists of the separate works of several independent authors; for it contains four distinct histories of the life of Jesus; a narrative of the proceedings of his followers, after his death; a considerable number of Epistles, in which the principles of Christianity are clearly unfolded; and, lastly, a book of Revelation, replete with prophetical descriptions of events which were to affect the church of Christ, during her great career, through much opposition and many sufferings, to victory, glory, and perfection. These works have, through a long series of ages, been attributed to Matthew, John, Peter, Paul, James, and Jude, apostles of Jesus Christ; and to Mark and Luke, companions of the apostles in the work of the ministry.

Now, it must, I think, be allowed by every impartial and reflecting person, who has studied the New Testament, that it is a book of great intrinsic weight and excellence; and one that, from the very nature of its contents, is calculated to attract our regard and attention. It is distinguished (as its greatest enemies must allow) first, by a full, and apparently authoritative, republication of the great truths of natural religion: secondly, by a clear statement of several additional doctrines, novel and extraordinary indeed, but, if true, of infinite importance to the human race; and, thirdly, by the purest code of practical morality ever known to have been ushered into the world. Such a book *demands* of every person of good sense and

adequate information, a serious examination of those grounds on which rests its claim, first, to authenticity, and secondly, to divine authority. Before, however, we can attempt to prove that the history contained in the New Testament is, in all its particulars, true, and that the doctrines taught in it are divine, it is necessary to state the evidences upon which may be established the proposition, that these sacred books are genuine—that they are not forgeries—that they were really written in the apostolic age, and by the persons whose names they severally bear.

In briefly treating on this branch of our subject, I may, in the first place, adduce the testimony of Eusebius, a Christian writer of great learning and authority, who flourished at Cæsarea in Palestine, (A.D. 315.) In a well-known passage of his Ecclesiastical History, he presents us with a list of the Writings contained in the New Testament, and declares that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of Paul, and the first Epistles of John and Peter, were universally confessed to be genuine.[1] At the period when Eusebius made this declaration, these sacred books were very widely circulated; they were read by ecclesiastics and laymen, by philosophers and peasants, in public assemblies and in private houses; and copies of them were multiplied throughout Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Lesser Asia, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Gaul. Since they were thus generally known and disseminated, and freely subjected to the examination of both friends and enemies, and that at a period when the sources of accurate information respecting their true origin were at once numerous and easily accessible; and since they were, nevertheless, *universally confessed to be genuine;* their actual genuineness is, in fact, indisputable. To forge, not only a single book, but a set of writings bearing severally their distinct characteristics, and to palm that forgery on so diversified a multitude of inquirers, in such a manner as to convince them *all* that these fictitious productions were genu-

[1] ὁμολογουμένα. *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* lib. III. cap. 25.

ine, and had always been regarded as such since the date at which they were considered to have been composed, would be a moral impossibility.

It is true that Eusebius excludes from the list of sacred books, thus universally received, the Epistles of James and Jude, the second and third Epistles of John, the second Epistle of Peter, and the Apocalypse. He acknowledges that the origin of these works was doubted by *some persons*:—a fact which plainly evinces that a real discrimination was exercised on the subject, and that the genuineness of the bulk of the New Testament rested on clear and incontrovertible evidences. At the same time, it ought to be observed, that the doubts entertained by some persons, in the days of Eusebius, respecting the writings which he thus excepts, were not of long continuance. These books were soon afterwards received by the general consent of Christians into the canon of Scripture; and modern investigation (conducted principally by the indefatigable Lardner) and, still more, the irresistible excellence of the works themselves, have confirmed the propriety of this decision.

Having remarked the extravagant absurdity which, under the circumstances now mentioned, attaches to the notion that the New Testament is a forgery, I may proceed to advert, somewhat more explicitly, to the evidences of which we are still in possession, and which positively evince its genuineness,—it being understood that these evidences, although extensively applicable to the disputed books, and particularly to the Apocalypse, bear, with a *preeminent degree* of force, on the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the thirteen Epistles of Paul,[2] and the first Epistles of John and Peter.

I. We have, in the first place, allusions to the contents of these sacred books, or actual quotations from them, in the works of a multitude of ecclesiastical

[2] The *apostolic date* of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is often enumerated as Paul's fourteenth epistle, is ascertained beyond the shadow of a doubt: whether Paul was its author, or not, is still a subject of controversy; but the arguments in favor of the affirmative of the question are generally considered conclusive.

writers, who flourished during the first four centuries of the Christian era. Of the works of the apostolical fathers, who wrote before the first century was elapsed, but very scanty remains have come down to us in the present day. Nevertheless, a considerable number of allusions to the contents of the New Testament, especially to those of the Gospels and the Epistles of Paul, are to be discovered in the writings still extant of Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp. Several of these allusions are of a nature very precise and definite. When, for example, we read in the Epistle attributed to Barnabas, (a treatise which, almost beyond question, was composed during the first century)—"It is written, *there are many called, but few chosen*"—we cannot refuse to allow, that such a passage affords a very pointed evidence of the genuineness of the Gospel of Matthew: *comp.* Matt. xxii. 14. When, again, we find Clement (A.D. 96) exhorting the Corinthians *to take in their hands* "*the Epistle of the blessed Paul the apostle*," and *to mark his admonition* "*respecting himself, and Cephas, and Apollos*," we cannot, with any reason, doubt the genuineness of the Epistle which Paul had previously addressed to the same church: *comp.* 1 Cor. i. 12. In the second century, our evidences gradually become larger and clearer. To select a few of the principal of them: we are informed by Eusebius, that Papias, an Asiatic Bishop, (A.D. 116) referred in his writings to several distinct parts of the New Testament.[3] Justin Martyr (A.D. 147) has alluded to many of the Epistles of Paul, and has quoted extensively (though somewhat loosely and inaccurately) from the four Gospels, which he denominates *the memoirs of Christ, or the memoirs of the apostles and their companions.* In the remaining works of Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, (A.D. 170) we find large extracts from the New Testament; and we are in possession of his testimony to the authority of nearly *all* the writings contained in it. Tertullian of Carthage and Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 200) have each of

[3] *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* lib. III. cap. 39.

them transcribed, in various parts of their theological treatises, a very large proportion of the whole New Testament; and Lardner justly observes, that the quotations from it, adduced by Tertullian alone, may be deemed greatly to exceed in number those made from the works of Cicero, by all the writers combined, who have ever cited him. The same may, with equal propriety, be said of Origen, (A.D. 230) whose citations from the various parts of the New Testament are exceedingly abundant: and, after him, we have a host of writers in all the departments of the multiplied and extended church, whom it would be tedious to name, and by whom the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation, are quoted to the same extent, and with the same variety, as by modern theologians: *see Lardner's Credibility*, 4to edit. vols. i, ii.

But the testimonies borne by Christian writers, during the first four centuries, to the genuineness of the New Testament are by no means confined to the quotation of particular passages. Many of them, like Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, and Cyril, have given catalogues or canons of the books of the New Testament; a measure which was also taken by the council of ecclesiastics, held at Laodicea, (A.D. 363). Others, like Tatian, (A.D. 170)[4] composed harmonies of the four Gospels: and many more wrote commentaries on the several constituent parts of this sacred volume.

Now, as the evidences thus afforded by Christian writers during the first four centuries, are very abundant, and various in form and manner, so it is to be remembered that this vast company of witnesses consisted of individuals, who lived at different times, were scattered over widely separated countries, occupied very different stations in the church and in the world, and were, in general, totally independent one of another. But, diversified as they were in almost every respect, yet, in the testimony which they bear to the

[4] "Tatian," says Eusebius, "composed I know not what harmony and collection of the four Gospels, which he called Dia Tessaron, and which is still in the hands of some." *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* lib. IV. cap. 29.

genuineness and authority of the New Testament, there is an entire and uninterrupted harmony. What can account for such a harmony, but truth?

II. During the first few centuries of the Christian era, while revealed religion was gradually spreading in the world, many versions of the New Testament were made into the vernacular dialects of those nations among whom a knowledge of divine truth was disseminated. The old Syriac version contains the whole of the New Testament, except the Revelation and four of the Catholic Epistles, viz. the second of Peter, the first and second of John, and the Epistle of Jude. It is remarkably accurate and faithful, and was probably written during the second century. The same period is supposed to have given birth to those numerous Latin versions, and especially the Vetus Itala, mentioned by Augustine, which formed the basis of the Vulgate of Jerome. The existing translation of the New Testament into Sahidic, the language of Upper Egypt, is traced by the learned Woide to the same ancient date. The Ethiopic and Coptic versions also are of great and allowed antiquity. Now, these versions could not have been made, if the original of the New Testament had not existed previously; and it is quite obvious that they *would* not have been made, if that volume had not in those early ages been *generally* received as truly the work of the apostles and evangelists.

III. The genuineness of the books of the New Testament was allowed by the enemies of Christianity, as well as by its friends. Among the early heretics, who fell away from the truths of the Gospel into the most absurd and unscriptural errors, there were many who rejected the divine authority of those parts of the New Testament which did not comport with their own creeds. But, that its contents were the real productions of their supposed authors, seems to have been a point generally admitted by these bewildered disputants, as Michaelis shows to have been the case, in reference to particular parts of the New Testament, with the Ebionites, with Cerinthus, and with Marcion: *Introd. to New Test.*, vol. i. ch. ii. § 7, *by Marsh.*

Still more important is the testimony of the heathen enemies of Christianity. From the works of Origen we learn that his opponent, the acute and bitter Celsus, quoted largely from the New Testament, and argued against Christianity on the allowed principle, that the Gospels and Epistles were actually written by the apostles and their companions: and the same observation applies to those still more powerful enemies of our religion, Porphyry and Julian: *Michaelis*, vol. 1. ch. ii. § 8. It is a triumphant argument in favour of the New Testament, that, during the first three centuries and a half after the Christian era, almost the whole of it was admitted to be genuine by the opposers, as well as by the defenders, of Christianity; and that the first person of whom we read, as venturing to advance a contrary sentiment, was Faustus, an illiterate Manichæan, who lived at the close of the fourth century.

IV. The strong and satisfactory testimonies to which we have now adverted are confirmed by a variety of internal evidences of a very convincing character. The first of them is the dialect in which the whole New Testament is written. Greek was the language more generally spoken than any other in those various countries (considered as a whole) where the Gospel was first propagated. Since, therefore, it was the intention of the apostles and evangelists to be as extensively useful as possible, it was to be expected that they should write their histories and epistles in Greek. But the Greek, in which the New Testament is composed, is not classical Greek; it is the Greek which comes from the pen of Hebrews—with a very large infusion of their national phraseology. From this circumstance we derive a strong confirmatory evidence, that the New Testament was truly the work of the apostles and their companions. Certainly it could not have been written in those later periods of the church, when there were no longer to be found any Hebrew Christians. The Christian fathers of the second, third, and fourth, centuries, were utterly incapable of writing in any such dialect.

V. Another plain internal indication of the genuine-

ness of the New Testament may be found in the very numerous allusions, contained in its several parts, to the habits and conditions of the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, at the time when it is considered to have been written, as well as to many minor historical circumstances which happened during the life, or soon after the death, of Jesus Christ. The variety and particularity of these allusions are such as would never have been ventured on by a forger in an after age; and their correctness and freedom from anachronism, as evinced by the correspondent testimonies of Josephus and other authors, plainly prove that the New Testament was composed by individuals who were personally conversant with the subjects on which they wrote.

To point out a few particulars: a very considerable intricacy attaches to the history of the family of Herod: in the works of Josephus and other historians, we read of Herod the great, whom the senate of Rome, at the instigation of Marcus Antonius, appointed to be king of Judea—of his three sons, Archelaus, Philip, and Herod Antipas, who severally ruled over distinct provinces, viz. Judea, Galilee, and Trachonitis—of Herod Agrippa the elder, (grandson of Herod the great) under whose dominion these provinces were again combined, and who, on a public occasion, was smitten with a fatal disease at Cæsarea—and, lastly, of Herod Agrippa the younger, and of his sisters Mariamne, Bernice, and Drusilla, the last of whom was the wife of the Roman governor, Felix. Now, in the New Testament most of the principal members of this family are mentioned, and a variety of allusions are made to their history, character, and circumstances: and, although some of these details are of a subordinate nature, yet all of them, on examination, turn out to be correct; they are the faithful, natural, references of cotemporary writers to facts which are known to have taken place in their day. Precisely the same may be said of the account, given in the New Testament, of the various Roman governors in Judea and elsewhere; of the titles and dignities which they bore; of the authority which they assumed; and of the practices to which

they and their people were accustomed. All is natural—all is evinced, by other well-authorized evidences, to be correct and real. With regard to the Jews themselves, the argument now stated is much enhanced in value by the consideration that, after the taking and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, (A. D. 72.) the customs and general condition of that extraordinary people underwent, in various respects, a total change. When we find the evangelists, who profess to relate the events of their own time, describing, incidentally indeed, but *truly* and *accurately*, the very peculiar circumstances of the Jewish polity under the government of Rome—the course of the priesthood—the councils—the synagogue worship—the sects, and their opinions—and the general habits and character which, at that remarkable period, are known to have attached to the Jews, we may rest fully assured that the Gospels are no forgeries—that they are the genuine production of the apostolic age, and of the authors whose names they bear. *For the particulars appertaining to this part of the subject, see Lardner's Cred.*, book I, part i.

VI. Lastly, One part of the New Testament will often be found to afford a powerful confirmation of the genuineness of another. For example, the Gospel of John bears strong marks of having been written in order to complete the account of the life and discourses of Jesus, as delivered by Matthew, Mark, and Luke; and thus, the positive evidences adduced in favour of his Gospel are reflected on those of his predecessors. Again, the numerous undesigned and almost latent accordances which subsist between the statements made by Luke in "the Acts," and by Paul in his Epistles, afford an ample moral demonstration that the Book of Acts was really composed, as it professes to be, by one of Paul's companions, and that the Epistles attributed to Paul were actually the work of that highly-gifted person, whose labours and ministry are so graphically represented in the Book of Acts. So also a striking uniformity of style may, in general, be observed between those different works in the New Testament, which are attributed to the same author.

On this ground, if we prove the genuine origin of the Gospel of John, (as we may do by a reference to innumerable quotations,) that of his first Epistle is, on critical grounds, easily established. If, from historical evidences, we are satisfied that the Acts of the apostles were written by Luke, we cannot reasonably dispute the genuineness of his Gospel. If the testimonies of many early Fathers compel us to admit that the Epistle to the Romans was really the work of Paul, we may be sure that he was the author also of the other twelve Epistles inscribed with his name; since they are all written in the same inimitable manner; all display the same extraordinary mind; and, with respect to the mode of thought, of argument, and of practical application, are generally cast in the same peculiar *mould*.

On a reference to the principal points adverted to in the present Essay, it will be observed: *first*, that from a fair view of the attributes of God and of the condition of man, there arises a strong antecedent probability of such an especial revelation of divine truth as Christianity professes to be. *Secondly*, that the introduction of the Christian revelation into the world is a matter of undisputed history, and that the substance of it is contained in the New Testament. *Thirdly*, that this volume, deserving as it is of the regard and attention of all men, from its intrinsic excellence, professes to have been written by six of the apostles of Jesus Christ, and two of their companions. *Fourthly*, that, in the early part of the fourth century, at a time when the New Testament was very largely disseminated in the Church of Christ, the bulk of it was "confessed by all to be genuine," and that the same character was soon afterwards, with equal unanimity, attributed to its remaining parts. *Fifthly*, that its genuineness is amply evinced by a variety of both external and internal evidences, viz: — innumerable quotations in the writings of the early fathers; catalogues, harmonies, and commentaries; early versions into foreign dialects; the testimony of heretics and of heathen enemies; the peculiarity of the language in which it is written; the correct allusions contained in

it to the customs which prevailed, and to the events which occurred, during the age of Christ and his apostles; and, lastly, the reciprocal accordances of its several parts.

Now, I conceive that, the more we examine these evidences, and make them the subject of our reflection, the more ready shall we be to adopt the opinion of Paley and other authors, that, in point of number, extent, variety, and harmony, they are far superior to those which can be brought to bear on any ancient classical book whatsoever. If, then, we entertain no doubt that the Cyropædia is the work of Xenophon; the Æneid, of Virgil; the Tusculan Disputations, of Cicero; and the Gallic Commentaries, of Cæsar; much less have we any reason to hesitate in receiving the New Testament, as the production of the evangelists and apostles.

Here, perhaps, the inquiry may be suggested, what appearance of evidence is it probable could have been produced in favour of the books of the New Testament, *had they been really spurious?* This inquiry may be answered by an appeal to facts. We are actually in possession of spurious Gospels, spurious acts of Paul, and spurious Epistles, purporting to be written by Christ or his followers. It is probable that these wretched forgeries were produced during the second, third, and fourth, centuries of the Christian era; and the first production of some of them is matter of history. Now, they are not once alluded to by the fathers of the first century. By those of the three next centuries they are seldom cited: when cited, they are never adduced as *Scripture*, and are sometimes expressly declared to be destitute of all authority. They were the subjects of no commentaries. They were uniformly excluded from the canons of sacred books. They were written in a style totally differing from that of the New Testament, though unskilfully copied from it in parts: and lastly, they abound in absurdities, contradictions, anachronisms, trifling ridiculous details, and narrations even of an immoral tendency. While, therefore, these spurious productions afford a proof of the antecedent

existence of those books which they so irreverently mimic, the inherent and extrinsic circumstances appertaining to their character and history may serve to show us how matters would have stood with the New Testament, had it also been spurious; and the absolute genuineness of that pure and unsophisticated volume is rendered more than ever manifest by the contrast: *see Horne's Introd.*, vol. i. p. 717. *Jones on the Canon.*[5]

Finally, while it is thus abundantly evident that the New Testament is the genuine work of the evangelists and apostles, we have every reason to believe that *its text*, as we have long been accustomed to read it, is substantially correct and uncorrupted. The early multiplication of copies among persons of so many different characters and situations, and, in process of time, of such various religious persuasions, while it would naturally give rise to a vast number of unimportant various readings, afforded a sure check against the corruption or wilful alteration of the sacred text. The copies thus early made and disseminated may be regarded as the precursors and prototypes of those very numerous manuscripts of the New Testament which are still preserved. These therefore form one proper criterion for the final settlement of its text.

[5] The aprocryphal Gospels and Epistles, now extant, form but a small proportion of that mass of absurd and irreligious forgery which was poured forth by the wilder sects of heretics during the second, third, and fourth, centuries. The very fact, that almost the whole of these productions have long since been lost and forgotten, while the canonical books have, in all ages of the Christian church, been received and carefully preserved, affords, in itself, a sufficient evidence of the spuriousness of the former, and of the genuineness of the latter. The ancient fathers were accustomed to cite these spurious works, for the purpose of showing that, in point of learning, they were on a par with their opponents. When speaking of the forged Gospels, Origen, after distinguishing them from the four genuine ones, writes as follows:—"Legimus ne quid ignorare videremur, propter eos qui se putant aliquid scire, si ista cognoverint:" *Hom. in Luc.* i. 1. So also Ambrose, "Legimus ne legantur (ab aliis); legimus ne ignoremus; legimus non ut teneamus, sed ut repudiemus, et ut sciamus qualia sint in quibus magnifici isti cor exultant suum;" *Comment in Luc.* i. 1. *Jones on the Canon*, vol. i, 129.

Other criteria, of no less efficacy and importance, are found in the ancient versions of that volume, and in the multitudinous extracts from it, transfused into the pages of the early fathers. Now, the whole of these criteria have been applied by a succession of modern critics, with astonishing industry and great discrimination; and the result of their labours is this—that the Greek Testament, as it was read by the earliest reformers, and translated by the authors of our common English version, continues *unimpaired*, and, with very few exceptions of any moment, *unaltered*. It has not been deprived of a single doctrinal truth, of a single historical narration, of a single moral precept.

ESSAY II.

ON THE CREDIBILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND ON THE EVIDENCE OF MIRACLES.

HAVING considered the evidences which prove with so much clearness that the New Testament is the genuine work of some of the apostles and their companions, we may proceed to the examination, and I trust, to the proof, of two additional propositions —namely, first that the history related in it is true, and therefore, secondly, that Christianity is of divine origin.

When we read the history of past transactions, as they have been recorded by Thucydides, Livy, or Tacitus, we do not hesitate in receiving such history as authentic, because we have no reason to doubt the general veracity and accuracy of these authors, and because the events which they relate are for the most part such as frequently take place, and are in themselves easily credible. Neither should we feel any difficulty in receiving the testimony of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, respecting the circumstances which form the subjects of their several narratives, had not many of those circumstances been of a directly miraculous nature, and therefore at variance with the common course of our experience. The question immediately arises, whether the veracity of the sacred historians is so far confirmed by collateral considerations, as to overcome, in the mind of the candid reasoner the difficulty of which he is sensible, in admitting the the truth of a miraculous history ?

Before, however, we proceed to discuss this question, it may be proper to observe, that the improbability of the Christian miracles may by the superficial observer, be very easily overrated. Though miraculous interruptions of the regular order of nature must ever of necessity differ, in one point of view, from usual experience—as such events would otherwise be no longer miracles—it is no longer consistent with all experience—with the whole known course of nature and providence—that God should adapt his *means* to his *end*. If then we allow that one great end which God, in the whole of his moral dispensations, has in view, is the virtue and happiness of his creatures; if, further, when we reflect on the gross moral darkness which overspread the world before the coming of Christ, we cannot but admit that, in order to this end, a clear external revelation of the divine will was desirable and even necessary; and if, lastly, we confess that miracles were a fit and proper test (beyond any other indeed which we are able to conceive) by which the divine authority of such revelation might be tried and determined;—we cannot refuse to acknowledge that, under these particular circumstances, the miraculous events recorded in the New Testament were far from being *really* improbable; that, on the contrary, they truly coincided with the analogy of God's moral government, and, therefore, with the experience of mankind, in *the most comprehensive sense of those expressions*.

Having considered this point, we shall be the more ready to listen to the evidences which may be brought forward, to prove the absolute credibility of the apostles and evangelists; and, if we find these evidences strong, various, and harmonious, and therefore *satisfactory*, our natural reluctance against the belief of supernatural events will, I trust, (as far as relates to the present case) be entirely subdued, and will yield to a full and settled persuasion, that the history of the New Testament is true. I may now proceed concisely to state those evidences, in the order which strikes me as the most clear and natural.

I. "That which was from the beginning," says the

apostle John, "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.... that which we have *seen and heard*, declare we unto you:" 1 John i. 1, 3. The doctrines which the apostles promulgated had been imparted to them by the very lips of their divine Master, and of the wonderful events which they commemorated, in their preaching or in their writing, they had themselves been eye-witnesses. Among the writers of the historical parts of the New Testament, Matthew and John were actually present when the greater part occurred of those circumstances which form the subject of their narrations; and Luke writes as an eye and ear-witness in that simple, yet highly descriptive, history—the book of Acts. This circumstance invests their testimony with a peculiar efficacy and value, and gives rise to a feeling of satisfaction respecting the authenticity of their narratives, similar to that which must ever attach (for example) to the perusal of Xenophon's Anabasis, of Cæsar's Commentaries, and of Lord Clarendon's Memoirs. Nor is it a much lower degree of confidence which we may justly feel in perusing the Gospels of Mark and Luke, since it was from apostles and eye-witnesses, that these authors derived that "perfect understanding of all things from the very first," by which they were so well prepared for the office of evangelists: *see* Luke i. 1—4.

II. In the Gospels we possess, in the second place, the harmonious testimony of four cotemporary, yet independent, historians to the same facts. Numerous indeed are the circumstances connected with the birth, life, discourses, death, and resurrection, of Jesus, of which we find corresponding details in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The greater part of these circumstances are also narrated by Mark; and John, who wrote some time after the other evangelists, while he furnishes the addition of some facts, and of many large discourses, explicitly confirms the general history, as well as many of the minor particulars, related by his predecessors. Between the Gospel of John and the three preceding Gospels, there may, more-

over, be observed a variety of *incidental* accordances, which afford a conclusive evidence of the veracity of the respective historians. To mention a single example, among the many instances so ably stated by Paley; the first three evangelists, in describing our Lord's Prayer and agony in the garden, advert to his earnest supplication, that "this cup might pass" from him; and Matthew adds his words, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done:" ch. xxvi. 42. John is silent on this point of the history; but in describing the scene which immediately followed, he relates in perfect, though apparently *undesigned*, analogy with the account given by the other evangelists of the preceding circumstances, that, when Peter would have defended Jesus on the approach of his enemies, our Lord (whose mind must have continued to dwell on the same pious sentiment) expressed himself as follows: "Put up thy sword into the sheath: *the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*" ch. xviii. 11: *see Paley's Ev.* vol. ii. ch. 4.

But, accordant and harmonious as are the testimonies borne by the four evangelists to the facts of the Gospel history, they proceed from separate and independent witnesses, as is satisfactorily evinced by the *apparent differences* which exist among their several narrations of certain *minor* circumstances. These differences are just such as would naturally arise in the true relations made by four credible persons of the same series of facts; and, while they may be generally accounted for, on the principle that the different parts of the same scene were impressed with different degrees of force on the respective witnesses—that some things were uppermost in the mind of one witness, and others in that of another—they afford an incontrovertible evidence that the narrators did not borrow their statements from one another, but that every one told his tale according to his own apprehension of the circumstances which he related. Thus, then, is the authenticity of the four Gospel histories manifested by a striking, natural, and characteristic, variety, in the midst of a very comprehensive harmony.

I have already found occasion to notice, as affording an evidence of the genuineness of the Epistles of Paul, and of the book of Acts, the coincidences subsisting between the history and the letters. These coincidences are largely unfolded by Paley, in his admirable work, entitled the Horæ Paulinæ. They are numerous and diversified, and, however latent to the superficial reader, when once observed, are singularly pertinent and striking. It may now be remarked that this obviously undesigned, yet curious and perfect, adaptation between these respective parts of the New Testament, affords a conclusive evidence, not only of the genuineness of those writings, but of the fidelity of that sacred historian, who has detailed with so much vigour and simplicity the proceedings of the infant church of Christ, and more particularly the life and travels of the apostle Paul.[6]

[6] Between the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul there subsists a number of coincidences, of a *marked* and *obvious* character. Those, however, which form the principal subject of the *Horæ Paulinæ* are, in general, so *latent* and *oblique*, that they could not have been *designed*, and are to be regarded as the natural consequence, and therefore, the sure indications, of the genuineness and independence of these writings, and of the *truth* of the statements which they contain. The following examples will elucidate my meaning:

In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle thus expresses himself: "We are come as *far as you also* in preaching the Gospel of Christ:..... having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you, according to our rule, abundantly to preach the Gospel *in the regions beyond you*:" x. 14—16. In this passage it is plainly, yet very indirectly, indicated, that Corinth was the extremity of the apostle's European travels *hitherto*. Now, this oblique hint, arising so naturally in the course of Paul's epistolary communication with the Corinthians, is in perfect accordance with the history contained in the Acts of the Apostles, of the only journey which he had made into Europe, previously to the writing of this Epistle: for, in describing that journey, the author of the Acts informs us that, after passing through Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens, the apostle finally arrived at Corinth, *where he stopped*; and from whence, after a residence of a year and a half, he sailed back into Syria: *see* Acts xvi, xvii, xviii.

In the ninth chapter of the Acts we read, that Paul was suddenly converted, when on his way to Damascus. The whole description must be familiar to the reader, and need not here be quoted. Now, in his Epistle to the Galatians, we find him thus adverting to this

III. Although, from the harmony of the historians of the New Testament, considered in connexion with their distinctness and independence, we derive one principal evidence of their veracity, yet, if we take up the four Gospels and the book of Acts, and consider them *singly*, we shall find that they severally contain a powerful internal evidence of truth. The various narrations presented to us in those books are distinguished by a circumstantiality and naturalness which the most practised writer of fiction would be at a loss to imitate, and which the comparatively illiterate authors of the New Testament must have been utterly

remarkable event: "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem, to them that were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, *and returned again unto Damascus;*" i. 15—17. "In this quotation from the Epistle," says Paley, "I desire it to be remarked, how incidentally it appears, that the affair passed at *Damascus*. In what may be called the direct part of that account, no mention is made of the place of his conversion at all: a casual expression at the end, and an expression brought in for a different purpose, alone fixes it to have been *at Damascus*; 'I returned again to Damascus.' Nothing can be more like simplicity and undesignedness than this:" *Horæ Paulinæ*, p. 147.

In Acts xv. 36—41, we read of a dispute which arose between Paul and Barnabas, in consequence of the determination of the latter (contrary to the desire and judgment of his companion) "to take with them John, whose surname was Mark." Nothing is said by Paul, in his Epistle, on this subject; but, in Col. iv. 10, we are indirectly informed of a circumstance, which is evidently explanatory of the conduct of Barnabas—namely, that Mark was one of his near relatives. "Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, saluteth you, and *Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas.*"

In Acts xvi. 1, we are told that Paul "came to Derbe and Lystra, and behold a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman *which was a Jewess and believed*; but his father was a Greek." In 2 Tim. i. 5, the apostle writes to Timothy, thus: "Greatly desiring to see thee..... when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, *and thy mother Eunice*; and I am persuaded that in thee also." "Here," remarks our author, "we have a fair, unforced example of coincidence. In the history Timothy was 'the son of a Jewess that *believed*;' in the Epistle, St. Paul applauds '*the faith* which dwelt in his mother Eunice:' *Horæ Paul.* p. 309.

Again, the fact, that the mother of Timothy was "a Jewess," is

incapable of assuming, in the propagation of falsehood. Let the candid and unbiassed inquirer carefully peruse the history of the cure of the palsied man, in Matt. ix ; of the Baptist's communication with Jesus, in Matt. xi; of Peter's walking on the sea, in Matt. xiv ; of the conversation between Jesus and the rich young man, in Mark x ; of Simeon and Anna, and of the early life of Jesus, in Luke ii ; of the sinful woman in the house of Simon, in Luke vii ; of Martha and Mary, in Luke x ; of Zacchæus, in Luke xix ; of the man born blind, in John ix ; of the death and raising of Lazarus, in John xi ; of the first meeting of the

virtually, though in a manner evidently undesigned, indicated by the apostle, when he says to Timothy, "from a child thou hast known the *Holy Scriptures* ;" 2 Tim. iii. 15. By the "Holy Scriptures," the apostle undoubtedly intended the Old Testament ; and in what manner could Timothy have known, "from a child," the Jewish Scriptures, had he not been born on one side, or on both, of Jewish parentage ? "Perhaps," observes Paley, "he was not less likely to be carefully instructed in them, for that his mother alone professed that religion." *Horæ Paul.* p. 311.

On some similar examples of concurrence, Paley, in another passage of his work, reasons as follows: "To us who have been long conversant in the Christian history, as contained in the Acts of the Apostles, these points (mentioned in the Epistles) are obvious and familiar; nor do we readily apprehend any greater difficulty in making them appear in a letter purporting to have been written by St. Paul than there is in introducing them into a modern sermon. But, to judge correctly of the argument before us, we must discharge this knowledge from our thoughts. We must propose to ourselves the situation of an author, who sat down to the writing of the epistle without having seen the history ; and, then, the concurrences we have deduced will be deemed of importance. They will, at least, be taken for separate confirmations of the several facts, and not only of these particular facts, BUT, OF THE GENERAL TRUTH OF THE HISTORY.

"For, what is the rule with respect to corroborative testimony which prevails in courts of justice, and which prevails only because experience has proved that it is a useful guide to truth? A principal witness in a cause delivers his account: his narrative, *in certain parts of it*, is confirmed by witnesses who are called afterwards. The credit derived from their testimony belongs not only to the particular circumstances in which the auxiliary witnesses agree with the principal witness, but in some measure *to the whole of his evidence ; because it is improbable that accident or fiction should draw a line which touched upon truth in so many points* ;" *Horæ Paul.* pp. 151, 152.

early church, in Acts i ; of the cure of the lame man in the temple by Peter and John, and of their subsequent arraignment before the magistrates, in Acts iii and iv ; of the scene between Peter and Cornelius, in Acts x ; of the proceedings of Paul at Athens, in Acts xvii ; of his interview with the elders of the Ephesian church, in Acts xx ; of the voyage of that apostle to Rome, in Acts xxvii and xxviii :—and he will find in these several narratives, as well as in the multitude of others not here noticed, the simple and strong, yet almost inimitable, characteristics of unadorned reality.

The internal evidences of truth to be observed in the several historical books of the New Testament, as they are singly considered, are however by no means confined to the circumstantiality and naturalness of the narrative. The fidelity of the historians is, if possible, yet more plainly established by the evident honesty and candour with which they tell their tale, and promulgate their religion. Not a single instance can be discovered, in the works of these writers, of forced attempts to complete or bolster up a particular system—of apologies for apparent difficulties—of railing against their enemies, or of commendation of themselves. On the other hand, they bring forward with the utmost simplicity, and with that total absence of reserve which nothing but integrity can produce, the humiliating circumstances of their Divine Master's parentage, birth, life, and death—and the various moral deficiencies—the fearfulness, impatience, unbelief, and foolish pride—which were, on particular occasions, so remarkable in their own conduct.

IV. Closely connected with the points of evidence mentioned in the two last sections are the consentaneous traits of *character*, which mark the history, given in the New Testament, of several individuals. What for instance, can be in more perfect accordance than the behaviour of Martha and Mary, as described by Luke, with their conduct on other occasions, as represented by John ? *see* Luke x. 38—42 ; John xi. xii.

The very singular character of the zealous and fervent, yet fearful, Peter, displays itself in various parts

of the Gospel history with all the consistency of truth. In him, who walked forth on the surface of the stormy sea to meet his Lord, and then, from want of courage and faith, sank in the waves, how plainly do we recognize the individual who so rashly made use of the sword in defence of Jesus, and immediately afterwards forsook him and fled; who was the foremost in a profession of belief in the Son of God, and in the hour of personal danger denied him thrice; who was the first to promulgate the Gospel to the Gentiles, and was afterwards afraid to eat with them, in the presence of the Jews!

In the once zealous and determined advocate of the Jewish law, and eager prosecutor of the unoffending Nazarenes, we cannot fail to trace the characteristic temperament of that great apostle who, under the transforming power of divine grace, became the most ardent, resolute, and indefatigable, of the servants of Christ.

But of all the characters thus naturally depicted in the New Testament, by far the most singular and, at the same time, the most particularized, is that of Jesus himself. His lowliness and meekness, the tenderness of his compassion, the firmness with which he resisted temptation, his forbearance, his mercy towards his enemies, his subjection to the will of the Father, his devotional spirit, his unwillingness to be made public, his boldness in reproving hypocrisy, his patience and fortitude, his custom of converting every occurring circumstance into a channel for doctrine and instruction, his paternal love for his disciples, his perfect gentleness, yet irresistible *authority*, with many other traits of grace and virtue, constitute, as a whole, a character which has no parallel—original and perfect.

Now, in a circumstantial statement of the conduct and behaviour of a fictitious personage, it would be very difficult for a single author to sustain the description of such a character in all its peculiarity and in all its perfection. But, when we see a character, thus peculiar and thus perfect, unfolded with the most beautiful precision, and presented to us in all

its parts without any real deviation or inconsistency, *by four distinct and independent writers*, we are compelled to confess that, for such a result, nothing whatever can account, but actual and unvarnished truth.

V. The numerous *correct* allusions made in the New Testament to the manners and customs prevailing among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, at the time when the books contained in it were written, have already been adduced in evidence of the genuineness of those books. Such allusions may also be fairly pleaded in proof the authenticity of the narrative —of the veracity and accuracy of the narrators. Very important, in the same point of view, are the confirmations of various parts of the Gospel history, derived from the pages of Jewish, Greek, and Roman historians. That Christ was not an imaginary person, that he really lived, and that he was the founder of the Christian religion, are facts, as has been already hinted, which rest on the testimony, not only of the evangelists and apostles, but of heathen authors; more particularly of Lucian, Suetonius, and Tacitus. By the last of these writers are expressly, though incidentally, recorded, the country of Jesus, the era in which he lived, the government to which he was subject, the extensive diffusion of the principles which he promulgated, and his ignominious and violent death: *Annal.* lib. xv. cap. 44.[7] There are other

[7] 'Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos, et quæsitissimis pœnis affecit, quos per flagitia invisos vulgus *Christianos* appellabat. Auctor nominis ejus *Christus, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio effectus erat.* Repressaque in præsens exitiabilis superstitio rursus erumpebat, non modo per *Judæam originem ejus mali*, sed per urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocia aut pudenda confluunt.'

'For the purpose, therefore, of putting an end to the report (of his having caused the conflagration of Rome,) Nero falsely accused, and most cruelly punished, a class of persons, hated for their crimes, who were commonly called Christians. Christ, the author of that name, was put to death as a malefactor by the Procurator Pontius Pilate, during the reign of Tiberius. But this injurious superstition, although repressed for a short time, again broke out, not only in Judea, where the evil originated, but also in Rome, whither there is a conflux, from every part of the world, of all atrocious or shameful things.'

circumstances, of *minor* importance, in which an exact coincidence has been observed between the New Testament and the records of profane history. To mention a single instance—the address of the apostle Paul to the Athenians was occasioned, as we read in the book of Acts, by his having observed in their city an altar inscribed to the *unknown God*. Now, the existence of altars at Athens, dedicated to *unknown Gods*, is expressly mentioned by Pausanias and Philostratus. A curious story is moreover related by Diogenes Laertius respecting the lustration of the city by Epimenides, on the occasion of a great pestilence which occurred some hundred years before the Christian era. Victims were then slain in various parts of the Areopagus; and, over the same places, *anonymous altars* were erected to the several propitious, but unknown, deities, by whom the plague was stayed: *In Epimenide*, lib. i. cap. x. § 3.

Between Luke, the largest writer of narrative in the New Testament, and Josephus, the great historian of the Jews, who wrote during the first century, there have been discovered two or three apparent discrepancies of statement, which, were they irreconcilable, might be accounted for by the supposition of a slight degree of inaccuracy on the part of either historian; but which the indefatigable Lardner has, in fact, succeeded in reconciling. On the other hand, the accordances between the history of Josephus and those of Luke and the other evangelists, in relation more especially to the various Jewish and Roman governors, whether princes, priests, or procurators, who lived in Palestine during the age of Christ and his apostles, are (as we have already observed) numerous, peculiar, and precise: *see Lardner's Credibility*, vol. i. part i.

If it be urged that the circumstances related in the Gospel history, which have thus received confirmation from Jewish and heathen authors, were not *the miracles of Christ and his apostles*—it ought to be observed, that the accounts of those miracles in the New Testament are in so perfectly natural a manner wrought up with the rest of the narrative, and the

events, miraculous and not miraculous, so intimately interwoven, that, on receiving a sufficient evidence of the truth of one part of the history, we cannot easily refuse to allow the authenticity *of the whole.*

The collateral testimonies of Jews and Gentiles to the *miracles* of Christianity are, however, neither scanty nor obscure.[8] Josephus, in a passage of his Jewish Antiquities, of which the genuineness, although doubted by some persons, is supported by numerous critical evidences, has expressly mentioned the miracles and resurrection, as well as the life and death of Jesus: lib. xviii. chap. iii. § 3.[8] Pontius Pilate recorded the miracles of Christ in that journal of his government which, in conformity with a well-known practice of the Romans, he appears to have transmitted to the metropolis, to be enrolled in the archives of the

[8] Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ιησοῦς, σοφὸς ἀνὴρ εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητὴς, διδασκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων· καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ιουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ελληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο. ὁ Χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ' ἡμῖν, σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου, οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ γε πρῶτον αὐτὸν ἀγαπήσαντες. ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν, τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μύρια θαυμάσια περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένων οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον. 'At that time there arose Jesus, a wise man, if, indeed, he ought to be called a man: for he was a worker of miracles, and a teacher of those persons who gave a willing ear to the truth; and he was followed by many persons, both Jews and Greeks. He was (or was called) *Christ.* And when Pilate, at the instigation of our leading men, had caused his crucifixion, those who had formerly loved him still persevered in their attachment. For, on the third day, he again appeared to them, alive—the inspired prophets having declared these and a multitude of other wonderful things respecting him. Up to the present day, the people who from him have derived the name of Christians continue to subsist.' This passage is found in all the copies of the works of Josephus now extant, whether printed or manuscript, and also in certain ancient translations of them: and it is quoted by Eusebius and many other fathers, in the fourth century. The objections to its genuineness are ably answered in *Horne's Introd.* vol. 2, p. i. chap. vii.

empire. These Acta Pilati are mentioned by Tertullian and Eusebius, and were expressly appealed to, as affording a proof of the truth of the Christian miracles, by Justin Martyr, in his public apology, addressed to the emperor Antonius and his senate: *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* lib. ii. cap. 2. *Tertull. Apol.* cap. 21. *Justin. Apol.* i. pp. 65, 72, *Ed. Ben.* That the miracles of Christ and his apostles actually took place was, also, more or less directly allowed by Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, who unable to refute the evidences of their reality, contented themselves with attributing these wonderful works to the power of magic; and a somewhat similar admission is made by those Jewish enemies of Christianity—the authors of the Talmud: *see Lardner*, 4to. edit., vol. iii. 557, vol. iv. 113—149, 209—250, 311—348.

VI. In the preceding sections, our attention has been almost exclusively directed to the credibility of the four historical writers of the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These writers, however, were far indeed from being the only Christian witnesses of the truth of that *miraculous* history which is recorded in their Gospels. All the twelve apostles (Matthias having been substituted for Judas) and others of the earliest followers of Christ, persons who had heard his doctrine and beheld his actions, were engaged in the same work. They proclaimed the principles of Christianity, and adduced the miracles of Christ, as well as their own, in proof of the divine origin of the religion which they taught: *see* Acts x. 39, &c. That preeminent miracle, the spontaneous resurrection of their Divine Master from the dead, was more especially a fact to which they all appealed, and with the truth of which (according to their own account of the matter) they were all personally acquainted: for the apostle Paul assures us that the risen Jesus had appeared first to Peter, then to all the apostles together, and afterwards to "five hundred brethren at once:" 1 Cor. xv. 6. Now, the numerous individuals who were thus engaged in bearing their testimony to the miraculous history of the Gospel went forth as preachers of Christianity into

every part of those very countries where the miracles of Christ are said to have taken place, and at a period when the whole circumstances of the case were fresh in the recollection of their hearers: and, although they were surrounded by a host of inveterate enemies, were carried before many formidable tribunals, and were subjected to the most severe examinations, *(see, for example,* Acts iv. xxiv—xxvi;) no want of consistency appears to have been discovered in their testimony; nor is there the slightest ground to suppose that their story met with any refutation.

To consider this branch of the subject with somewhat more of precision, it is plain that these earliest propagators of the Gospel, in their capacity of witnesses of the miracles and resurrection of Christ, were neither *deceived* nor *deceivers.*

That they were not *deceived,* appears from two considerations. First, that the apostles—the principal persons thus engaged, and who had been present with Jesus during the whole course of his ministry—were no *enthusiasts* or *fanatics:* for the four Gospels, (considered as genuine and *generally* credible histories) afford abundant evidence that they were simple, sober, and unsophisticated, persons; that, so far from being distinguished by eager credulity, they were full of fears, prone to distrust, and peculiarly slow and cautious in the reception of Christian truth. Secondly, that the very numerous miracles, to the performance of which they bore testimony, are described as having been subjected to their frequent yet cool and deliberate observation, and as being at the same time of far too decided a character to admit of any mistake or delusion. When, for example, the Lord Jesus, after he had publicly expired on the cross, and had been as publicly watched in his grave, repeatedly appeared alive in the midst of their company, conversed with them, ate with them, and showed them his wounds—when they saw him, heard him, and handled him,—it is certain that they could not be deluded, when they admitted the fact of his resurrection.

That the apostles were not *deceivers,* is a point equally susceptible of moral demonstration. The entire can-

dour and honesty manifested by two of their number, in recording the humiliation of their master, as well as their own faults and those of their brethren, have already been noticed; nor can any thing be more evident than the simplicity and godly sincerity which distinguish the Epistles of Paul, Peter, James, Jude, and John. Jesus himself was denominated *the Truth;* and from various passages of the New Testament it is manifest, that a deep sense of the importance of truth was one *principal characteristic* of his followers. The personal virtue of the apostles is indeed indisputable; they were engaged in propagating the strictest code of morality which had ever been heard of in the world; and they were thus engaged, under sanctions and motives of unspeakable weight and moment. More especially, it was a doctrine explicitly recognized among them, that Satan was the father of lies, and that liars were exposed to eternal punishment in the world to come: *see* John viii. 44; Rev. xxii. 15.

The veracity of the apostles may also be justly measured by their disinterestedness. They sought no temporal advantages; they pursued no outward emoluments; they engaged in a career fraught with inconveniences, dangers, labours, and sorrows; they gave up all that was naturally dear to them, and sacrificed their pleasures, their comforts, and their worldly hopes, to the welfare of mankind, and to the service of a crucified Redeemer. Their cause was the cause of righteousness, and in the support of that holy cause they exposed themselves, without reserve, to "cruel mockings and scourgings," to "the spoiling of their goods," to "bonds and imprisonments," and, finally, to the violent infliction of death itself.

Since then, the original witnesses of the Christian miracles were of so sober and cautious a character, and were placed under such circumstances, with respect to the miracles, that they could not be *deceived:* and since their acknowledged virtue and disinterestedness afford the most satisfactory evidence that they could not be *deceivers,* I know not how the impartial inquirer can escape from the conclusion, that the story which they told *is true.*

VII. The earliest preachers of the Gospel were enabled, through divine assistance, to confirm their declarations respecting Christ by the miracles which they wrought themselves. "They went forth," says the evangelist Mark, "and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word, *with signs following:*" ch. xvi. 20. The numerous instances which confirm this declaration, and which are recorded in the book of Acts, cannot be here adduced with propriety, since the credibility of that book is in part the subject of our discussion; but we may safely call in the testimony of the apostle Paul, who, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, expressly appeals to "*the signs of an apostle,*" "*the signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds,*" which he had wrought in the presence of *the very persons whom he was then addressing:* 2 Cor. xii. 12. On another occasion, he gives the Corinthian Christians directions respecting the right use of that miraculous gift of tongues which they themselves enjoyed: 1 Cor. xiv. Had Paul spoken to the Corinthians only of the miracles which he had wrought among the Ephesians, we might have hesitated in admitting his testimony; but, when we find him appealing to the Corinthians as *eye-witnesses* of his works; when we observe him, moreover, familiarly adverting, in his written communications with them, to *their own* supernatural endowments, and when we take into account that this apostle was neither a fool nor a madman—we cannot with any reason deny the position, that the earliest propagators of Christianity were gifted with miraculous powers.

VIII. Lastly, let us notice the astonishing propagation and prevalence of early Christianity. Absolutely opposed as it was to the prejudices of the Jews, and to the systems and habits of the Gentiles; offering, in the history of a crucified Redeemer, to the former a sore offence, and to the latter a tale of foolishness; and involving all who embraced it in the loss of temporal advantage, and in a path of almost unexampled mortification, self-denial, and suffering; the religion of Christ and his apostles extended itself, in primitive times, with irresistible rapidity and force. Thousands

were converted by the preaching of Peter, on the day of Pentecost. Soon afterwards, multitudes were added to the church, of both men and women: Acts v. 14. From Jerusalem the new religion spread through Samaria and Syria, and churches were presently gathered in numerous parts of Lesser Asia and Greece. In the reign of Nero, (A. D. 65) "great multitudes" of Christians (as we are expressly informed by Tacitus) were discovered at Rome; and Pliny, when writing to Trajan, (A. D. 107) from his government in Bithynia, describes "the contagion of this superstition" as seizing the lesser towns as well as the cities; as spreading among persons of both sexes, of all ages, and of every rank: and as producing the neglect of the temples, and the intermission of the ceremonies of idolatry.[9] Africa, Spain, Gaul, Germany, and Britain, gradually

[9] The celebrated letter of Pliny the younger, to Trajan, on the subject of the Christians in Bithynia, is as follows:—'Health.—It is my usual custom, Sir, to refer all things, of which I harbour any doubts, to you. For who can better direct my judgment in its hesitation, or instruct my understanding in its ignorance? I never had the fortune to be present at any examination of Christians, before I came into this province. I am therefore at a loss to determine what is the usual object either of inquiry or of punishment, and to what length either of them is to be carried. It has also been with me a question very problematical,—whether any distinction should be made between the young and the old, the tender and the robust;—whether any room should be given for repentance, or the guilt of Christianity once incurred is not to be expiated by the most unequivocal retraction;—whether the name itself, abstracted from any flagitiousness of conduct, or the crimes connected with the name, be the object of punishment. In the mean time this has been my method, with respect to those who were brought before me as Christians. I asked them, whether they were Christians: if they pleaded guilty, I interrogated them twice afresh, with a menace of capital punishment. In case of obstinate perseverance, I ordered them to be executed. For of this I had no doubt, whatever was the nature of their religion, that a sullen and obstinate inflexibility called for the vengeance of the magistrates. Some were infected with the same madness, whom, on account of their privilege of citizenship, I reserved to be sent to Rome, to be referred to your tribunal. In the course of this business, informations pouring in, as is usual when they are encouraged, more cases occurred. An anonymous libel was exhibited, with a catalogue of names of persons, who yet declared, that they were not Christians then, nor ever had been; and they

fell under the influence of revealed truth; and at last, at an early period of the fourth century, Christianity was become the generally-adopted and established religion of the whole Roman Empire.

Now, these undisputed facts afford a highly satisfactory confirmation of the whole preceding series of evidences. It must, I think, be plain to every candid and reflecting mind, that so ready and extensive a

repeated after me an invocation of the gods and of your image, which, for this purpose, I had ordered to be brought with the images of the deities: They performed sacred rites with wine and frankincense, and execrated Christ,—none of which things, I am told, a real Christian can ever be compelled to do. On this account I dismissed them. Others, named by an informer, first affirmed, and then denied, the charge of Christianity; declaring that they had been Christians, but had ceased to be so, some three years ago, others still longer, some even twenty years ago. All of them worshipped your image, and the statutes of the gods, and also execrated Christ. And this was the account which they gave of the nature of the religion they once had professed, whether it deserves the name of crime or error,—namely—that they were accustomed on a stated day to meet before daylight, and to repeat among themselves a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and to bind themselves by an oath, with an obligation of not committing any wickedness;—but, on the contrary, of abstaining from thefts, robberies, and adulteries;—also, of not violating their promise, or denying a pledge;—after which it was their custom to separate, and to meet again at a promiscuous harmless meal, from which last practice they however desisted, after the publication of my edict, in which agreeably to your orders, I forbade any societies of that sort. On which account I judged it the more necessary to inquire, by torture, from two females, who were said to be deaconnesses, what is the real truth. But nothing could I collect, except a depraved and excessive superstition. Deferring therefore any further investigation, I determined to consult you. For the number of culprits is so great, as to call for serious consultation. Many persons are informed against, of every age and of both sexes; and more still will be in the same situation. The contagion of the superstition hath spread not only through cities, but even through villages and the country. Not that I think it impossible to check and to correct it. The success of my endeavours hitherto forbids such desponding thoughts: for the temples, *once almost desolate*, begin to be frequented, and the sacred solemnities, which *had long been intermitted*, are now attended afresh; and the sacrificial victims are now sold every where, *which once could scarcely find a purchaser*. Whence I conclude, that many might be reclaimed, were the hope of impunity, on repentance, absolutely confirmed.' Lib. x. ep. 97.

reception of Christianity, at a period of time when all the circumstances of the life and death of Jesus were recent, and in the face of natural and moral difficulties apparently insurmountable, could by no means have taken place, had not the history on which the religion was founded been *true*—had not the miracles of Christ and his apostles been *real.*

Thus numerous and satisfactory are the evidences which establish the fidelity of the apostles and evangelists, and which prove that the miraculous history of the New Testament is a true history. On a review of our whole argument, we may observe, first, that the apparent improbability of the Christian miracles is in great measure removed by the consideration of their perfect suitableness to a highly probable end; and secondly, that we may confidently believe in their reality, for the following reasons—because two of the historians, by whom they were narrated, were eye-witnesses of the facts, and the two others, companions of eye-witnesses — because the Gospels contain the *harmonious* testimony of four cotemporary, yet *independent*, writers; the history detailed in the book of Acts being also verified by its undesigned coincidence with the Epistles of Paul—because the histories contained in the New Testament severally display, in the circumstantiality and naturalness of the narrative, and in the many candid statements made by their authors, the unquestionable marks of truth —because the accounts given in the New Testament, of a multitude of civil and historical circumstances, are confirmed by the testimony of Josephus, and of heathen writers—because the miraculous part of its history was (probably) stated by Josephus, was recorded in the Acta Pilati, and was even allowed to be true by the Jewish heathen enemies of our religion —because the many original witnesses of the Christian miracles (particularly the apostles) were no enshusiasts, and *could not be deceived* respecting such plain and palpable facts—because their known sentiments on the subject of lying, their established moral character, and their disinterested devotion to the cause of righteousness, (evinced by their willing sufferings, and

sealed by their deaths) plainly show that they could not be *deceivers*—because, while they bore testimony to the miracles of Christ, the apostles were enabled to work miracles themselves, as is evinced by the appeal of Paul to the Corinthians—and because, lastly, unless we admit the truth of the Gospel history, we cannot account for the very extensive diffusion (in the face of powerful obstructions, and in opposition to all prevalent systems and habits) of early Christianity.

Having thus offered to the reader a slight sketch of the evidences on which Christians build their confidence, that the miraculous history recorded in the New Testament is true, I shall detain him but a very short time longer, while I consider our second proposition, viz., that *Christianity is*, THEREFORE, *to be received as a religion of divine origin.*

We acknowledge that God created all things, and that he established those general laws, by which the order of nature is regulated and maintained.

Miracles are supernatural infractions of those general laws and changes in that order; and, since no *creature* can justly be deemed to possess any inherent independent power of controverting the designs, and of interrupting the harmonious arrangements, of an omnipotent God, miracles are, when real and ascertained, to be regarded as the especial work of God himself.

Now, we have already had occasion to notice that the miracles of Christ and his apostles were of a plain and palpable description. Let it, however, be yet more particularly remarked, that they were conspicuous and *very great;* performed in the presence of many witnesses, and often in the midst of large public assemblies; exceedingly numerous, and, in their character and nature, greatly diversified; sudden and immediate in their operation; and, in general, totally incapable of being accounted for by any subordinate or secondary cause. When Jesus Christ made the storm a calm—when the boisterous winds and long agitated waves obeyed him in an instant—when he walked on the surface of the deep—when he restored sudden health and strength to the withered, the crippled, and the impotent, and even limbs to the maimed—when he

bestowed on the man who was born blind a perfect power of vision—when he multiplied the five barley loaves, so that they became the sufficient food of many thousands of persons—when he raised to life Lazarus, who had been buried four days, and was then putrifying in the grave—when he burst asunder the bands of his own mortality, and presented himself to his followers alive from the dead—when, through the instrumentality of Peter and John, the lame man in the temple suddenly and publicly walked and leaped for joy—when the prayers of the former apostle were the means of restoring life to the deceased Tabitha—the most cautious and scrutinizing observer must have been compelled to allow, that these were no conjuror's contrivances, but *real* miracles, actual and indubitable infractions of the established laws of nature.

Such a conclusion respecting the miracles of Jesus Christ and his followers derives a further confirmation from the comparison of them with those signs and wonders so idly pleaded by Hume and other infidel writers, in opposition to Christianity. While the evidences which prove that the Christian miracles really took place are both numerous and clear, and while those miracles were of so plain and decisive a character as to preclude the possibility of delusion, the prodigies advanced on the other side of the question are either such as might readily be accounted for by secondary causes, or such as are not to be believed, because we are in possession of no solid or sufficient evidence that they ever happened. The former of these characteristics attaches to the cures said to be wrought at the tomb of the Abbé de Paris; the latter, to the wonders of Pythagoras, Vespasian, and Appollonius: *see Paley's Evidences*, vol. i. p. 349.

To the conclusion, however, that the miracles recorded in the New Testament could be the work of God only, an objection is sometimes urged, which it may be desirable concisely to notice. It is remarked that the Egyptian magicians, who were employed by Pharaoh in opposition to Moses, and who were therefore on the side of the Lord's *enemies*, were enabled, by the power of evil spirits, to work miracles.

Now, for my own part, I have no great difficulty in acceeding to the judgment of many able biblical critics, who explain the wonders of these magicians as the mere contrivance of expert jugglers. If, however, it be allowed that, on some peculiar occasions, and under especial control and limitation, God permits evil spirits to exercise a certain degree of miraculous power over the order of nature, such an admission will by no means affect the divine origin and authority of the Christian miracles. When we consider the *benevolence* of those miracles, as well as their *number*, *variety*, and *greatness*, it seems impossible for us to refuse to attribute them to a merciful and omnipotent Being.

That they were not produced by the power of evil spirits, we may moreover rest satisfied, for two additional reasons—first, because they were wrought in direct attestation of that which professed to be a revelation of the divine will, for the guidance and instruction of mankind; for it is morally impossible that the God of all truth should permit his enemies to affix to a fictitious revelation of his will the seal of miracles—of numerous, stupendous, undoubted miracles—and thus consign his reasonable creatures to inevitable and irremediable error; secondly, because they were wrought in support of a religious system, which was directed in all its parts to righteous ends; which was therefore entirely opposed, on the one hand, to the dominion of the powers of darkness, and perfectly conformed, on the other, to the moral attributes of God.

Thus, then, there appears to be nothing which can interrupt our conclusion, that God alone was the author of the Christian miracles. And, since God alone was their author, Christianity, which was attested by them, is the religion of God.

ESSAY III.

ON THE EVIDENCE OF PROPHECY.

THE evidence of the divine origin of Christianity, afforded by the miracles of Jesus Christ and his apostles, although substantial and satisfactory, is not to be considered as standing alone; for it forms only one division of a cumulative proof. Such has been the providential care exercised by our heavenly Father over the spiritual interests of men, that he has been pleased to furnish them with a *variety of correspondent and harmonious* signs, that the religion, by means of which their salvation is to be effected, proceeds from himself.

In the present essay, I propose to take a concise, yet comprehensive, view of the sign of *Prophecy*.

Of those future events which are connected with the established order of nature—such as the rising and setting of the sun on the morrow; the growth of a plant from the seed sown in the earth; the death of mortal creatures now living—analogical reasoning enables us to form a correct apprehension. Sometimes also the intelligent observers of moral and political causes are enabled, by a somewhat more difficult application of the same species of reasoning, to form successful conjectures respecting future circumstances, appertaining not so much to the order of nature as to the scheme of Providence. But, ready as we may be to allow these positions, we cannot conceal from ourselves that an *actual knowledge* of the future is one of the characteristic and peculiar attri-

butes of the Supreme Being. Every one who believes in the existence, unity, and omniscience of God, will propably be willing to confess that He has no counsellor—that it is He *alone* who conducts the operations of nature, and regulates the course of events—that a knowledge of the future is the knowledge of his *secret designs*,—and, therefore, that such a knowledge can be communicated to mankind only by divine revelation.

From these premises it follows, that all prophecies which, by the exactness of their fulfilment, as well as by the complex or singular nature of the circumstances to which they relate, are proved to have proceeded, not from mere human conjecture, but from a real foreknowledge, must have been dictated by the Almighty himself; and further, *that a religion which is attested by such prophecies is a divinely authorized religion.*

That any system of religion, except that of the Scriptures, has ever been thus attested, no enlightened inquirer will presume to assert. The folly and vanity, mixed up as they were with art and delusion, which distinguished the omens, the auspices, and the oracles, of the ancient Greeks and Romans, are now universally acknowledged. And, with respect to Mahometanism, it does not even pretend to establish its authority either by miracles or by prophecy. Mahomet could direct his hearers to no existing prophecies of which he was the subject, and he was far too prudent, and far too sensible of his own fallibility and imposture, to venture upon any tangible prediction himself: *see Porteus's Evid.* ch. viii. *Rees's Cyclop. Art. Mahometanism.*

How then does this matter stand with Christianity? Every reader of the Bible must be aware that our religion professes to be attested by prophecies. Do the prophecies, by which it is attested, relate to circumstances of such a nature, and is the accomplishment of such of them as have been fulfilled so complete and accurate, as to lead us to a sound conclusion that they were inspired by the Almighty, and therefore that the religion which they attest is *his* religion? A little investigation will enable us to give a satisfactory answer to this interesting inquiry.

Jesus Christ himself was a prophet. He did not hesitate to foretel future occurrences of a very extraordinary and complicated nature; and many of his predictions have been already verified by events.

In our Lord's being betrayed into the hands of the chief-priests and scribes, by Judas Iscariot; in his being by them delivered to the Gentiles; in his being mocked, scourged, spitted on, and crucified; and in his rising from the dead after three days; there was much that was singular, complicated, and not to be easily calculated on beforehand. Yet we find, from the harmonious testimony of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that Jesus, during the course of his ministry, predicted all these circumstances in the most explicit terms: *see* Matt. xvi. 21, xx. 18; Mark x. 33; Luke xviii. 31; John xvi. 32, &c.

It was a circumstance placed far out of the reach of any probable conjecture, that the zealous Peter should not only deny his Lord, *but deny him three times, before the cock crew.* Yet this circumstance was predicted by our Saviour with a perfect exactness, while he and his disciples were still in a condition of apparent safety, and immediately after a hearty profession of fidelity on the part of Peter: Matt. xxvi. 33, 34.

The effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of our Lord, after his ascension, was one of the most striking, and, according to mere natural observation, one of the most improbable events which ever happened. This event also was plainly foretold by Jesus: *see* John xiv. 16. xvi. 7; Acts i. 5, 8.

But, among the prophecies uttered by our Saviour, there is no one so much detailed, or clothed in such impressive language, as that which relates to the fall and desolation of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, the dispersion of the Jews, and finally the end of the world. This remarkable prediction is related by Matthew, (ch. xxiv.) Mark, (ch. xiii.) and Luke, (ch. xxi.) and is in accordance with the affecting expressions addressed by our Lord to Jerusalem or its inhabitants, on two other occasions: *see* Matt. xxiii. 37, 38; Luke xxiii. 27—31.

We read that, when the disciples of Jesus pointed out to him the magnificence and extensive structure of the temple, Jesus declared the days to be coming, when that splendid edifice should be utterly destroyed, and not even one stone be left upon another. This declaration gave birth to an inquiry *when these things should be, and what should be the signs of his coming, and of the end of the world?* In his answer to the question thus addressed to him, our Lord has plainly mentioned some of the principal circumstances which were to precede or accompany the two periods alluded to by his disciples—periods which they might probably confuse in their own minds, but which were in fact to be separated by a very long interval. At the first of these periods, the temple and city of Jerusalem were to be destroyed, and the power and coming of the Son of Man to be made manifest, in the punishment of the rebellious Jews; and all *these* things were to take place before the passing away of that very generation. On the arrival of the second period, the Son of Man was to appear in glory, as the judge of all flesh; and "of *that* day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven," but God only: Matt. xxiv. 34—36.

Now, although the consideration of these awful and still future events, which are to take place at the latter of these periods, is obviously placed beyond the scope of our argument, it is enough for our present purpose that the former branch of the prophecy has long since received its exact fulfilment.

The various signs which were to precede the destruction of Jerusalem; viz., the rising up of false Messiahs—the sore persecution and dismay of the Christians—the wars and rumours of wars among the various factions and petty nations into which Judea and the neighbouring countries were then divided—the famines, and the earthquakes, and other portents of nature—the preaching of the Gospel in every part of the Roman empire—all these things are declared in the prophecy; and we learn, from Josephus and other authors, that they all took place during that period of forty years which elapsed between the death

of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem: *vide Gill, on* Matt. xxiv. Then came the end; when the holy city was encompassed with armies, and the abomination of desolation" was found "standing in the holy place"—when that intense suffering was experienced by the wicked and obstinate Jews, to which the annals of history afford no parallel—when the city was utterly demolished, and not one stone of the temple left upon another—and when, lastly, such of the Jews as fell not by the sword were reduced to a condition of bondage and degradation, and were gradually dispersed among all nations—the whole of these circumstances being in precise and punctual accordance with the same prophetic record. Here, then, was such a prediction of a remarkable, complex, and wholly unexpected, series of events, as could arise out of no other source than the foreknowledge of God.

It is expressly declared by Jesus, that the days when all these calamities should overtake the Jews were to be the "days of vengeance." The calamities in question were appointed in the counsels of divine justice, as a punishment for that long course of rebellion against their Lord which had marked the history of the Jewish people, and especially for that most aggravated of their national sins, the rejection, persecution, and crucifixion, of their Messiah. Another purpose, to which this remarkable dispensation appears to have been directed (in conformity with a correspondent prophecy uttered by our Lord, respecting the approaching cessation of the Jewish and Samaritan worship, John iv. 21), was to establish the superiority of the Gospel over the law, by forcing to its termination that ritual system, on which the Jews were placing so dangerous and *untimely* a dependence. Under these circumstances, it is plain that the rebuilding of the temple, which had been thus levelled with the ground, and the restoration of the Jews to their ancient customs and privileges, would have been in direct opposition to the whole bearing and spirit of the remarkable prophecy now under consideration.

It was, in all probability, for the very purpose

of contradicting this prophecy (as well as others of the like import) and of thus throwing discredit on the religion of Christ, that the apostate Julian assembled the Jews in their own land, and committed to them, under the command and protection of his favourite Alypius, the task of rebuilding their magnificent temple. That task was eagerly undertaken; vast sums were set apart for the purpose, and multitudes of persons were zealously engaged in the prosecution of the work. But the work was constantly impeded, and was finally relinquished in despair, in consequence of vehement and repeated eruptions of fire from the once consecrated mountain of Moriah. This fact is recorded by Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Gregory Nazianzen, three cotemporary Christian writers, whom Gibbon himself allows to be "respectable witnesses;" and it is fully confirmed by the explicit and perfectly-unexceptionable testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus, an historian of acknowledged learning and veracity, a cool philosopher, a personal friend of Julian, and a pagan: lib. xxiii. cap. 1.[1] *See Warburton's Julian—Gibbon's Rom. Empire*, ch. xxiii. Thus was the site of the ancient temple of God, notwithstanding the most powerful human efforts, left to its appointed desolation. Now, whether the phenomenon which then occurred can be justly traced to any second or physical cause, or whether (under circumstances which rendered a miracle highly probable) it is to be regarded as entirely supernatural, it is in either case impossible not to perceive, in this well authenticated

[1] 'Et licèt accidentium varietatem sollicita mente præcipiens; multiplicatos expeditionis apparatus flagranti studio perurgeret: diligentiam tamen ubique dividens, [Julianus] imperiíque sui memoriam magnitudine operum gestiens propagare, ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolymam templum, quod post multa et interneciva certamina obsidente Vespasiano posteáque Tito ægrè est expugnatum, instaurare sumptibus cogitabat immodicis: negotiúmque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiochensi, qui olim Britannias curaverat pro Præfectis. Cùm itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius, juvarétque provinciæ rector, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere locum exustis aliquoties operantibus inaccessum: hócque modo elemento destinatiùs repellente, cessavit inceptum.'

fact, a wonderful display of the wisdom and power of the Deity—in support of the revealed designs of his own providence, and in confirmation of the predictions of the greatest of prophets.

Having thus considered some of the most remarkable predictions uttered by Jesus Christ, it will be desirable for us, in the second place, to take a view of those still more ancient prophecies, which are recorded in the Old Testament—in the sacred books of the Hebrews. Before, however, we can properly enter on this branch of our subject, I must premise a few general observations on that important part of Holy Writ.

When Ezra had returned with the people from captivity, and had settled with them in their own land, he employed himself, as is generally supposed, in arranging and determining the canon of Scripture; and the few books which were afterwards written are considered to have been added to the canon by Simon the Just, one of his divinely-authorized successors. Whether, however, the work be rightly attributed to these individuals or not, it is certain that the canon of Hebrew Scripture was formed long before the coming of Christ, and that the sacred books, thus collected together, were classed by the ancient Jews in three divisions—the law, the prophets, and the psalms, or hagiographa. "*The Law*" consisted of the first five books of the Bible, which contain the history of the creation, and of the Lord's servants for the first 2500 years after it, as well as a detailed account of the whole Mosaic institution; and which, during the successive ages of the Jewish church, appear to have been uniformly attributed to Moses himself. "*The Prophets*" embraced the book of Job and all the more ancient historical books, as well as those writings which bear the *names* of these inspired penmen; for the whole of the works now mentioned were ascribed by the Jews to the Prophets, who rose up in succession during the several stages of the Israelitish history. "*The Psalms,*" lastly, was the general name given to the sacred songs of David, Asaph, and others, and to the Proverbs, the Ecclesiastes, and the canticles of

Solomon: and to these were added by the Jews, under the general name of Cetubim, or holy writings, the Books of Ruth, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, and Chronicles: *see Prideaux Conn.* fol. edit. vol. i. pp. 261, 262, 452.

Now, that these various books of Hebrew Scripture are really of the antiquity which is usually attributed to them, and that those of them which are not anonymous were written by the rulers and prophets whose names they bear, we may safely conclude, for a variety of reasons. For, in the first place, they were universally esteemed as sacred, and of course also as genuine, by the Jews, at the Christian era; as we learn from very many passages of the New Testament, and from the express testimony of Josephus and Philo: *Josephus contra Apion.* lib. i. cap. 8, *Philo, passim.* Secondly, both the historical and prophetical parts of the Jewish Scriptures are largely quoted by both these authors, and also by the Talmudic writers, as well as by Christ and his apostles. Thirdly, they were translated, as a complete canon, into Greek, nearly 300 years before the Christian era, and of this version (the well-known Septuagint) we are still in possession. Fourthly, the book of the law was deposited in the archives of the tabernacle and temple from the days of its author, and was on many occasions publicly read to the people; and to this sacred deposit, appear to have been added, in succession, the writings of David, of Solomon, and of the prophets: *see Gray's Key to the Old Test.* p. 4. Fifthly, after the captivity, copies of the whole Hebrew Scriptures were multiplied, and both the law and the prophets were regularly read in the Jewish Synagogues. And lastly, in the language, in the circumstantiality of the narrative, in the reciprocal adaptation of its several parts, and in various other particulars, we find, in the Old as well as in the New Testament, plain internal indication of a genuine origin; *see Horne's Introd. to the New Test.* vol. i. chap. 2. sect. i.

Nor have we any reason to doubt the *general* correctness of the text of the Hebrew Scriptures, as it has come down to us in the present day. On the contrary, we have sufficient warrants for that correctness, in

the careful preservation of these divine writings by the Jews, before the Christian era; and afterwards in the labours of the textual doctors or Masorites, who elaborately employed themselves in ascertaining the readings, and even in numbering the letters of the several books, *see Prideaux Con.* vol. i. p. 278; in the ancient translations and paraphrases of the Old Testament; in the early multiplication of copies; and in the guard which the opposing sects of the Jews, before the coming of Christ, and the Jews and Christians after that era, must have reciprocally maintained, so as to prevent any wilful alteration of the common record.

Since the Hebrew Scriptures are thus indisputably genuine, and since, through a long series of ages, they have been so carefully preserved, we may proceed without further hesitation in making our appeal to their contents. Now, there is nothing which more distinguishes them, and more clearly indicates their sacred character, than the comprehensive and varied line of prophecy which runs in a rich vein through all their principal parts. In his dealings with Abraham and his descendants, (directed as those dealings were to the ultimate advantage of mankind in general,) God was pleased to make himself manifest, not merely by the operation of his grace, but by the two undoubted and especial signs of miracles and prophecy; and it was by these extraordinary means that, notwithstanding the remarkable proneness of the Israelites to rebellion and idolatry, and the powerful opposition of the enemies of God, revealed religion was maintained in its appointed course, until the time arrived for its diffusion over the world at large.

In the promises of God addressed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that their seed should be multiplied as the stars of heaven, and should inherit the land of Palestine, Gen. xxii. 17, &c. &c.—and in those addressed to Moses and Joshua, respecting the success of Israel in war, and the expulsion of the Canaanitish nations, Exod. xxiii. 28, &c.—in the communications made by the dying Jacob to his twelve sons, respecting the future condition of the several tribes of which they were the fathers, Gen. xlix.—in the predictions

of many singular events which were afterwards to distinguish the history of God's chosen people; such as the destruction of Baal's altar at Bethel, by Josiah, 1 Kings xiii. 2—the invasion of Judea by the Chaldeans, Hab. i. &c. &c—the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, Jer. xxi. xxxii. 28, &c—the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, Jer. xvii. 4, &c.—the cruel treatment, yet peaceable death, of Zedekiah, Jer. xxxiv. 2—5; Ezek. xii. 13—the continuance of a small gleaning or remnant in the land, Isa. xxiv. 13, 14—the deliverance of the Jews from their bondage after seventy years, Jer. xxv. 12—and the building of the city and temple under the auspices of Cyrus, Isa. xliv. 28—in the ancient curse pronounced against Canaan, Gen. ix. 25—in the threats of punishment and destruction issued many years, and sometimes even centuries, beforehand, against the idolatrous states which surrounded and oppressed the Israelites—in Daniel's description of the succession of the four great monarchies—in all these and many other prophecies, and in the gradual yet exact fulfilment of them, the ancient Hebrews were furnished with so many distinct evidences that God was the author of their religion, and the conductor of that great scheme of love and providence, of which they were themselves the immediate objects.

As events have continued to unfold themselves, however, these evidences have received a variety of important additions. When we reflect on the still wild and unsocial condition of the wandering children of Ishmael, Gen. xvi. 12; on the testimony of modern travellers, that the site of ancient Tyre is, in the present day, *a rock on which the fishermen spread their nets*, Ezek. xxvi. 3—5; on the curious fact that Babylon, in the fourth century, was converted by the Persians into a *park for wild beasts*, and that its uncertain remains are still traced amidst the habitations of venemous reptiles, Jer. l. li.; Isa. xiii.; on the gradual sinking down of Egypt into "the *basest* of kingdoms," Ezek. xxix. 15; and, above all, on the ruin and dispersion of the Jews themselves, who to this very hour are an "*astonishment, a proverb, and a*

by-word, among all nations," Deut. xxviii.—we must confess that we are favoured with *accumulated* proof of the divine origin of that ancient system of religion, of which Christianity is the crown and consummation.

But there are prophecies in the Old Testament of a still higher importance than those to which I have now alluded, and still more properly applicable to the subject of the present Essay, because they afford a direct attestation to the divine origin of Christianity itself. These are the prophecies, of which Jesus Christ, the long-expected Messiah of the Jews, was either the sole or the principal subject. "Search the Scriptures," said our Lord to the unbelieving Jews, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which *testify of me,*" John v. 39; and on another occasion, in reference to that well-known classification of the Old Testament already mentioned, he spoke of the things which were written concerning him "in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms:" Luke xxiv. 44. Accordingly we find that the *leading* object of that series of prophecies which pervades these several parts of the sacred writings of the Hebrews was to reveal to the people of God *a great moral or spiritual deliverer,* who was to arise in the Lord's appointed time, not only for *their* salvation, but for that of the whole world.

That such was to be his character, and such the object of his mission—that Christ was to be made manifest for the benefit of mankind in general, and in order to destroy "the works of the devil,"—was indicated in obscure and general terms by the very first prophecy recorded in Scripture; a prophecy which was delivered immediately after the fall of our first parents, and which declared *that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head,* Gen. iii. 15; and we soon afterwards read of the corresponding promise of God to Abraham, that in *his* seed, "*all the nations of the earth*" should be "*blessed:*" Gen. xxii. 18. The stock from which the Messiah was to spring was pointed out with a further restriction, and the *extensive* influence of his scheme of mercy was again adverted to in the prediction of Jacob, that the

sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh should come, and that to him should be the gathering of the people, or, as in the Hebrew, *of the nations:* Gen. xlix. 10. Moses, who was a mediator, a lawgiver, a shepherd of the people, and the meekest of men, predicted of this future ruler of Israel, that he should be *like unto himself:* Deut. xviii. 15—18. Job spake of Christ under the name of *Redeemer*, and prophesied that he should stand in *the latter days upon the earth:* Job xix. 23—27.

This general outline is filled up in the book of Psalms, and in those of both the major and minor prophets, by a great variety of yet more definite declarations respecting the filiation, the history, the nature, and the offices of the Messiah. In various parts of those sacred writings it is foretold, that this long expected deliverer should come forth out of the root of Jesse, Isa. xi. 1; and out of the family of David, Jer. xxiii. 5, that his coming should be preceded by the mission of another messenger, who is denominated Elijah the prophet, Mal. iii. 1. iv. 5, 6—that he should arise during the continuance of the second temple, Hag. ii. 6—9; and seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, from a fixed historical period, Dan. ix. 25—27—that he should be born miraculously of a virgin, Isa. vii. 14; and in the town of Bethlehem, Mic. v. 2—that his condition in life should be one of a very humble description, Isa. liii. 2—that he should be anointed of the Spirit, and engaged in proclaiming glad tidings, and in comforting the distressed, Isa. xlii. 1; lxi. 1—4—that his character should be remarkable for gentleness, kindness, faithfulness, and all-righteousness, Isa. xi. 1; xlii. 1—3—that, on his coming, there should take place miraculous cures of the blind, the deaf, the lame, and the dumb, Isa. xxxv. 3—6; nevertheless, that the Jews would refuse to believe in him, Isa. liii. 1—that he should be despised, rejected, and persecuted of men, Isa. liii. 3, 4: Ps. cxviii. 22, 23—that the rulers should take counsel together against him, Ps. ii. 2—that he should be betrayed by one of his familiar

friends, Ps. xli. 9—that his flock should be scattered, Zech. xiii. 7—that he should be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and be as a sheep, dumb before his shearers, Isa. liii. 7—that his hands and his feet should be pierced, Ps. xxii. 16—that he should be cut off, yet not for himself, Dan. ix. 26—that his body should not see corruption, nor his life be left in the grave, Ps. xvi. 10[2]—that he should ascend into heaven, Ps. lxviii. 18; sit at the right hand of the Father, and be a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedeck, Ps. cx. 1—4—that he should be the object of faith and allegiance to the Gentiles, Isa. xi. 10; xlii. 1, 7—and finally, that he should be the good and gracious Shepherd of his people, Ezek. xxxiv. 23; and exercise a peaceable and never-ending government over the children of men; Ps. lxxii: Isa. ix. 7: Dan. vii. 14, &c.

In addition to these numerous and principal circumstances, there are predicted in the Old Testament several *minor* particulars respecting the life, sufferings, death, and burial, of the Messiah, *see* Ps. xxii. 1, 8, 18; lxix. 21: Isa. liii. 9: Zech. ix. 9; and to crown the whole of their wonderful statement, the prophets, while they so exactly depict the circumstances of his human nature, and especially his humiliating sufferings and violent death, frequently describe him, nevertheless, as one possessing the name, and exercising the attributes, of *Jehovah* himself: *see* Isa. vii. 14; ix. 6, 7; xxxv. 1—6; xl. 3, 10, 11: Jer. xxiii. 5, 6: Zech. ii. 10—13. Mal. iii. 1—3, &c.

On the series of predictions now cited, I beg leave to offer two general observations.

In the first place, it may be remarked that, in the religion of the ancient Hebrews, the system of prophecy was very closely connected with the system of types. Not only did many of the ceremonies prescribed by the Jewish law represent, in a very striking manner, the principal features of the Christian dispensation; but several of the individuals, whose

[2] The words in Ps. xvi. 10, rendered "Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell," may with more propriety be rendered, "Thou shalt not leave my life, or person, in the grave."

lives and characters distinguish the page of Jewish history, and especially Moses, David, and Solomon, may justly be regarded as having been, in some respects, personal types of the Messiah. There are various passages in the New as well as in the Old Testament, which appear to countenance this idea, and from which we may gather, that it was currently received among the Jews; and the probability of its correctness is amply evinced by the correlative points to be observed in the comparison between the types and the antitype. Such being the case, it is by no means surprising, that a few of the prophecies now cited as relating to the Messiah are partially capable of a subordinate application to some typifying person. This is the case more particularly with certain passages in the Psalms, in which David describes the circumstances of his divine descendant, under the figure or shadow of his own: *see, for example*, Ps. xvi. xxii. xl. xli. *compare* Isa. vii. 14—16. It is, however, a very curious and confirming circumstance, that we may almost uniformly observe, in prophecies which are thus capable, *to a certain extent*, of a double application, particular parts which are totally unsuitable to the type, and which can be explained solely of the antitype. Nor is it to be forgotten, that a considerable proportion of the evangelical prophecies contained in the Old Testament are susceptible *only* of a direct and exclusive application to the *Messiah* himself.

These numerous prophecies, secondly, were uttered by persons who lived in very different ages, occupied a variety of stations, manifested a great diversity of character, and had in general no connexion with one another. Among the prophets whom I have now cited, are to be observed the names of Jacob, Moses, Job, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Micah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; and to these several others might be added. And it is worthy of observation, that, while they display a general accordance in their descriptions of the Messiah, they severally contribute to the common stock of information some particular circumstances, which serve to

distinguish their own predictions from those of others. Thus, for example, Moses mentions the resemblance of the Messiah to himself; Jacob, his tribe; David, his resurrection; Jeremiah, his family; Isaiah, his virgin mother; Ezekiel, his pastoral character; Malachi and Haggai, his appearance in the second temple; Daniel, the year of his birth; and Micah, his native city. The prophecies of Christ, recorded in the Old Testament, may be described as so many *rays* of divine instruction, bearing severally their distinct characteristics, passing through a vast diversity of channels, sent forth from their great original at many different periods of time, yet harmonizing and converging in the progress of their course, and in the end meeting to display the fulness of their light, in a *single focus.*

During the continuance of the second temple, before the sceptre had departed from Judah, at the precise time predicted by Daniel,—JESUS was born, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, of the family of David, at Bethlehem, of a virgin. We find him preceded by a prophet comparable to Elijah—living in a very humble outward condition—anointed of the Holy Ghost—engaged in preaching the Gospel to the poor, in comforting the mourners, and in relieving every species of bodily and mental distress—performing miraculous cures of the blind, the deaf, the lame, and the dumb—meek, gentle, benevolent, faithful, and fulfilling all righteousness—not believed in by the Jews—despised, rejected, and persecuted of men—betrayed by his familiar friend—forsaken, in the hour of trial, by all his followers—led as a lamb to the slaughter—dumb in the presence of his persecutors—nailed by his hands and feet to the cross—cut off, but not for himself—rising from the dead—ascending into heaven, sitting at the right hand of the majesty on high—the object of faith and allegiance to the Gentiles, and gathering the nations unto himself—exercising a spiritual dominion over the souls of men—fulfilling, in his own circumstances, a variety of minor particulars—and all these things in *precise conformity with the predictions of the Old Testament.* More especially, in the midst of his humiliations and distresses, and

notwithstanding the lowliness of his human character, we find him in full agreement with the record, claiming the attributes and honours, displaying the powers, receiving the homage, and denominated by the titles, which appertain only to Jehovah : *see* Matt. xii. 6—8 ; xviii. 20 : John v. 21—23 ; x. 28—30; xiv. 9, 23 ; xvi. 7 : Rev. ii. 23.....Matt. viii. 3, 8—13 ; *compare* Acts ix. 34 : Luke viii. 24 : Matt. xii. 25 : John ii. 24, 25 ; xvi. 19, 30 ; *compare* Rev. ii. 23 : John xx. 22.....Matt. xiv. 33 : John ix. 38 ; xx. 28, 29.....Luke i. 76 : John i. 1 ; xx. 28 : Rom. ix. 5 : Rev. xix. 16 ; xxii. 13.

When a lock and key precisely correspond, a presumption arises, even when they are of a simple formation, that they were intended for each other. When, instead of being formed in a simple manner, they are respectively of a curious and complex structure, and nevertheless correspond ; such a presumption is exceedingly strengthened. But when the lock is not only of a curious and complex structure, but contains such a wonderful combination of parts, that it is absolutely *sui generis*, and without parallel—when, among all the keys existing in the world, none present even any slight approach to a correspondent conformation, except one ; and by that one the lock is easily and exactly fitted—then is all doubt on the subject discarded, and it becomes a moral certainty that the lock and the key proceeded from the same master-hand, and really appertain to each other. Now this is a familiar, but precise, representation of the proof afforded by a comparison between the Old and New Testaments, that the predictions respecting Christ, which we have now been considering, were true prophecies, that God himself was the Author of these prophecies, as well as of the dispensation by which they were fulfilled.

Let us, then, briefly sum up our whole argument. Correct inferences respecting future events are often drawn from analogy by men ; but there is every reason to believe that the future is actually *known* only by that Being who has no counsellor, and who orders the course of events according to his own will.

Prophecies, which by the nature of the circumstances to which they relate, as well as by their fulfilment, are proved to have arisen from foreknowledge, must therefore be traced to God as their Author.

Several prophecies, to which this description perfectly applies, were uttered by Jesus Christ. A great many more, of the same character, are contained in those genuine ancient books which compose the Old Testament.

All these prophecies, therefore, have originated with God; and, since those among them, of which Jesus Christ was the subject, as well as those which he uttered himself, are plainly to be regarded as so many direct attestations of the Christian revelation, we are again brought to the conclusion, that CHRISTIANITY IS THE RELIGION OF GOD.

ESSAY IV.

ON THE INTERNAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

SINCE a knowledge of history and a certain degree of general literary attainment are necessary, in order to our forming a complete view of the external evidences of Christianity, and since such knowledge and attainment are necessarily placed out of the reach of a considerable portion of society, we ought to be very thankful that there are other evidences of the divine origin of our religion, which, to the sincere inquirer, in every condition of life, are matter of observation, and, to all true Christians, matter of experience. These are usually denominated, the *internal* evidences of Christianity.

Simple as the Christian religion is found to be in its operation, and easily understood as it is (so far as relates to its practical purposes) by persons of very limited mental cultivation, it is in fact, a complex system, a scheme made up of numerous parts. He, therefore, who would unfold the internal evidences of our religion in all their interesting detail, must examine every essential article which it proposes to our faith, every distinct feature of its law of practice, every single motive which it supplies to action, and every particular channel through which it influences the heart; and he must endeavour to show that all the several parts of this one great system are worthy of the wisdom of God, and adapted to the spiritual wants of weak and degenerate man. Since, however, it would be impossible to comprise within the proper

limits of one of these Essays so extensive a discussion, I shall attempt little more, on the present occasion, than to survey some of the principal moral effects produced by Christianity *as a whole*. For, although the divine origin of this scheme of religion may be traced, either in the unrivalled excellence of its moral code, or in the strength and harmony of its doctrines, and in their analogy with the known provisions of nature and providence, it is always to be remembered, that the *moral effects* of Christianity are, through the medium of faith and obedience, the result of its doctrines and precepts *combined*.

Before, however, we enter into the consideration of these effects, it ought to be clearly understood, that mere pretenders to Christianity have little or no connexion with our argument—that our views must be directed exclusively to those persons who have received revealed truth with cordiality, and who, without making reserves in favour of their own perverse inclinations, have really submitted their hearts to its sanctifying and saving influence. Such persons were the primitive Christians, whose firm faith and devoted and innocent lives have been declared and recorded, even by their enemies: *vid. Plinii Epist.* lib. x. ep. 97. And such also, whatsoever be their peculiar denomination, and notwithstanding their many infirmities, are the humble, peaceable, and unobtrusive, followers of a crucified Redeemer, even in the present day.

That it is at once fair and necessary to premise this distinction, a very slight degree of reflection may convince us. If the wheels of my watch are clogged with dust—if an untutored workman, in his ill-directed attempts to repair it, has added to it some fresh spring or pivot, foreign to the true principles of its structure, and has thus destroyed the order and beauty of the machine, and prevented the useful regularity of its movements—in such case, the effects produced by the instrument will afford a very imperfect proof, or no proof at all, of the skill of its original fabricator. But let the wheels be cleansed from the dust, and let all extraneous additions be removed, and the nice preci-

sion with which it will now indicate the progress of time will immediately afford an ample and unanswerable evidence, that he was indeed skilful. And thus it is also with Christianity. Like every other moral or civil institution, this great scheme of righteousness is liable, in the hands of man, to very considerable abuse. If we are to look at its effects where it has a merely nominal operation, or where it is obstructed with prejudice, loaded with superstition, or perverted by selfishness and passion, there can be no probability of our being able to trace in those effects any thing more than very partial indications of the wisdom from which it originated. Much less shall we form any just apprehension of that wisdom, if we follow the example of Gibbon and other modern infidels, who appear to try Christianity, not by the consequences of its genuine principles, but *solely* by the fruits of many depraved affections and superstitions, which, although they may have found a place among the *professors* of our religion, are in fact totally opposed to those principles, and are known to have no other origin than the folly and wickedness of the human heart. But, if we consider the Christian system in its genuine purity, and in its native and unimpeded operation—if we reflect on its principles, as they stand recorded in the unsophisticated volume of Scripture, and trace the effects of them where they are really received into the heart—then indeed we shall find abundant cause to believe, that Christianity has proceeded from a Being of perfect benevolence and skill.

Let us then proceed to examine a few of the principal particulars which appertain to this branch of evidence. I. *Christianity is the instrument by which mankind are brought into the exercise of those dispositions and duties which reason teaches us to be especially required towards the Almighty himself.*

It is generally allowed by such persons as confess the existence and unity of God (whether they are believers in the Christian revelation or otherwise,) that he is a Being not only of infinite knowledge, wisdom, and power, but of the highest moral perfections. A comprehensive view even of merely natural

religion leads to an easy admission of the declarations of Scripture, that God is just, holy, true, benevolent, and bounteous. Justice is, in many respects, legibly imprinted on the course of providence, as are benevolence and bounty on the contrivances of nature; and the truth and holiness of the Deity are powerfully evinced (even where the knowledge of an outward revelation has never penetrated) by the internal operations of that universal principle, which condemns man for iniquity, and is found to be a true and swift witness for God, in the souls of his reasonable creatures. Certain it is, however, that these moral attributes of the Creator and Governor of men may be traced in some of the declarations of ancient heathen philosophy, as well as in the frequent confessions of the champions of modern infidelity.

Such, then, being the acknowledged characteristics of our heavenly Father, it is unquestionably our *reasonable service* to trust in his goodness, to live in his fear, to love him with the whole heart, to worship him with true devotion of spirit, to obey his law, and to seek to promote his glory: and yet it is a fact, to which the history of past ages and present observation bear alike the most decisive testimony, that by mankind, in their unregenerate condition, this reasonable service is, to a very great extent, set aside and neglected. We are prone to depend upon many a broken reed—but in an omnipresent and merciful Deity we place no real confidence. We are surrounded by numerous objects of our fear; but among these objects a very subordinate place is occupied by *Him* who searches the hearts and the reins, and who punishes for iniquity. Our affections towards the creatures of God are fervent and often inordinate, but towards the munificent Creator, from whom all beauty and loveliness spring, our feelings are very generally those of cold and careless indifference. We may be so civilized as to be delivered from the senseless adoration of images of wood and stone; but we still find idols to worship, on which are fixed the covetousness, pride, evil concupiscence, and other depraved passions of our own hearts. Finally, in the eager pursuit after

our own glory (as we fondly imagine it to be), we are accustomed to forget that infinite Being, from whom we have received all our talents—from whom all true glory emanates, and in whom alone it must ever centre. Such are the dispositions, and such is the conduct of *unregenerate* man towards Him, in whom he lives and moves, and has his being. But Christianity, considered as a system consisting of both doctrines and precepts, and applied by faith to the heart—that is to say, comprehensive and vital Christianity—is the means of so transforming him, that, in the frame of his soul, as well as in the regulation of his conduct, he is brought to "*render unto God the things that are God's.*"

Let us briefly examine, in this point of view, the character and deportment of the devout yet unpretending Christian. Not only is his understanding convinced that God exists, and that he is "a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," but he lives in habitual dependence of soul upon the fidelity, the care, and the mercy, of his Heavenly Father. It is by faith that he draws near to God, and receives all the benefits of a divinely-authorized religion; and on the other hand, the more that religion operates upon him, the more is his faith in God enlarged and confirmed; the more entirely is he prepared to obey the exhortation of the prophet, "Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength."

The man who is brought by the operation of vital religion to a just apprehension of the purity and justice of the Deity, as well as of his own sinfulness, is prepared to offer to the Lord the acceptable sacrifice of a humble and penitent spirit. While he is preserved in this condition of sensibility and humiliation, there is nothing which he so much dreads as to offend against the law, and to expose himself to the judgments of the God of holiness. Thus is he brought to walk with vigilance in the *fear* of the Lord, which is described by the sacred writers, as "clean," as "the beginning of wisdom," and as "a fountain of life."

Yet, this fear is accompanied by an ardent love towards the Supreme Being. "*Thou shalt love the*

Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Such was the first and greatest commandment promulgated by the law, and confirmed by the Gospel —a commandment which, in itself, forms one of the most glorious and distinguishing features of the religion of the Bible—and to this commandment the true Christian is enabled to render a ready and effective obedience. When he becomes impressed, through the medium of revealed religion, with a sense of the intrinsic perfections and absolute loveliness of the divine character, the natural consequence is, that he loves God. But, how is our love for the Deity inflamed and strengthened, how is it invested with the holy ardor of gratitude, when Christianity has taught us the lesson, that "God hath first loved us"—that innumerable blessings are showered down upon us from the Author of all good, and that the Son of God himself condescended to assume our nature, and die on the cross, in order that *we* might live?

The faith, fear, and love, of which we have spoken, are the true preparation for the *duties of worship.* The Christian who is brought under the influence of these dispositions towards his Creator will ever be found to worship God *in spirit and in truth.* While he is careful not to neglect those outward duties of worship, which he may consider to be prescribed, he is no longer satisfied either with the bare performance of appointed ceremony, or with the services of the lip which have no corresponding feeling in the heart. He communes with God in spirit. He offers himself a living sacrifice to his Lord. He withholds not the heart-felt tribute of thanksgiving and praise, and, above all, *he lives the life of prayer.* Nor is the spiritual worship of the true Christian confined to those acts of devotion, in which he now experiences a delight, and exercises a diligence, foreign from all his former habits and dispositions. For such acts are but one connected part of that steady and practical allegiance towards God, which now distinguishes his whole life and conversation. Under a sense of the providential goodness of the Deity, he is taught, even

in the most painful circumstances, to submit with pious resignation to the will of God. And in the settled conviction that he is not his own, but "bought with a price," he devotes himself with simple and diligent obedience to the service of his divine Master. Finally, while he is fully aware that to himself belong shame and confusion of face, the true Christian heartily desires and earnestly promotes that good and great end, for which he was created—the glory of God.

II. *Christianity is the instrument by which mankind are brought into a conformity with the moral attributes of God.*

Whatsoever plausible theories may be formed among men, respecting the virtue and excellence of their own nature, the sober voice both of history and of experience declares, with a clearness which to the impartial mind can scarcely fail to be convincing, that man without divine grace is, to a very considerable degree, an *immoral* being. While he neglects those duties which are more immediately required towards God himself, he is lamentably prone to be unjust, untrue, impure, or unmerciful. In the fall of our first parents from that *moral image* of God, in which they were created, the Scriptures reveal to us the cause of this general depravation; but, without any further consideration, at present, of the source of the evil, let it be remembered that Christianity—unsullied and vital Christianity—is the means by which that evil is remedied, and the moral image of God restored to mankind.

A full acknowledgment of the infinite disparity between God and man—of the perfection of the former, and of the innumerable infirmities of the latter—must indeed form a feature in every sound system of ethics and theology; but moral qualities will ever be found to maintain their own unvarying tendencies. Holiness, justice, truth, and benevolence, whether they are regarded as the essential attributes of the Creator, or as the borrowed excellences of the creature, are still the same in their nature. As, then, the face of a man is seen reflected in the mirror, so are the moral attributes of the Deity seen reflected in the

conduct and deportment of the *real* Christian. Unworthy and fallible as he is, and liable as he knows himself to be to fall into some of the many snares which are placed around him by his spiritual enemy, he has, nevertheless, submitted with sincerity to the operation of that Gospel, which is, "the power of God unto salvation." And now, notwithstanding his remaining corruptions, the general effect produced in him by the work of religion is this—that, in the purity of his heart, in the holiness of his life and conversation, in the integrity of his words and actions, in the activity of his benevolence, in his gentleness, kindness, long-suffering and forbearance, in his love towards the whole family of man—he presents to our view a real and beautiful conformity with the moral characteristics of that omnipresent Deity, whom he fears, loves, and serves.

It must indeed be acknowledged that a cloud is too often cast over the two propositions which I have now ventured to state, by the lamentable imperfections even of sincere Christians. So easily do we yield to the temptations with which we are surrounded, and so prone are we to be superficial in the pursuit of our religious duties, that the pure light of truth, which ought to shine in our works, to the glory of our heavenly Father, is very liable to become obscured and tarnished. Nevertheless, our argument will still be found to rest on a solid basis; for these imperfections, like those grosser defects and perversions already alluded to, are obviously to be traced, not to Christianity, but to the lingering corruptions of the human heart, which have not yet been subjected to its sanative influence. Christianity itself is always the same, and its *tendency* towards the production of those admirable consequences which I have endeavoured to describe, is perpetual—invariable. Here it will be seasonable to notice one of the most glorious features of the Christian system, and one of the strongest internal evidences which it presents to us of a divine origin; namely, that, in the life and character of Jesus Christ himself, as recorded in the New Testament, we have a *perfect pattern* of those moral effects which Chris-

tianity is intended and calculated to produce. In him there was no spot or blemish whatsoever; no sin either in intention or action; but a perfect piety, purity, and charity; a plenary exercise of those dispositions, and an absolutely faultless performance of those duties which are required in Christians towards God, towards themselves, and towards their fellow-men. Christ is denominated, by way of supereminence, the IMAGE OF GOD! and the more we are subjected to the influence of his holy religion, the more completely is that image transfused into ourselves—the greater is our ability to obey that wonderful precept of our divine lawgiver: "*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*"

III. *Christianity is the instrument by which mankind are introduced to real happiness.*

Men, in their natural condition, are not only ungodly and vicious, but in various respects, unhappy. The moral disorders which abound in the heart, and which are perpetually displaying themselves in the transactions of men, seldom fail, even in this life, to be productive, in some form or other, of an equivalent measure of suffering and misery. It is probable, indeed, that whatever of pain, perplexity, and affliction, is endured by our species, may all be traced, either directly or indirectly, to these moral disorders. Now, since Christianity is the means by which such disorders are remedied, so it is also the means of procuring for mankind a real and substantial happiness.

That this position is true of genuine Christianity, the impartial observer will readily admit. The real Christian is a centre of happiness in the community to which he belongs. His benevolence, his forbearance, his love, his absence of selfishness, all tend to the peace and comfort of those who surround him; and, were the principles which actuate his life and conversation really diffused through the whole society of mankind, the causes of mutual disquietude, of oppression, robbery, confusion, and bloodshed, would entirely cease. Even where Christianity is very imperfectly practised, its effect in augmenting the social happiness of men is open to the most common observation. In the allevi-

ations of the hospital, in the mitigations of the method of war, in the place given in the scale of society to females, in the general decency of manners, and in the sacred character of the connubial tie — advantages which were comparatively little known even to the most civilized nations of heathen antiquity—we perceive so many proofs of the *tendency* of Christianity to augment the happiness of men—a tendency which would unquestionably be carried forward to *completion*, did we yield to the religion of our Redeemer its full and legitimate sway.

But, the happiness produced by Christianity becomes still more conspicuous, when we consider its operation on *individuals* who are really subjected to the influence of the Gospel. That Christians are to live, during their present state of existence, without a great deal of suffering, it cannot of course be my intention to assert. They are, like other men, exposed to bodily pains and temporal afflictions; they have often to mourn over their own transgressions, and over the iniquities which prevail in the world around them; and it cannot be expected that they should be able to deny themselves, to take up their daily cross, and to mortify every vain and ungodly desire, without undergoing a considerable degree of mental uneasiness and conflict.

Nevertheless, the true Christian has many sources of substantial happiness, which are all his own. Aware as he is of his entire unworthiness, and of his many sins, he has cast his burthen on the Lord, and can often rejoice in the humble confidence that his iniquity is pardoned, his guilt cleansed away in the blood of Christ; and thus he enjoys a true peace with God. Unable in his own strength to resist the temptations which surround him, or to walk in the path of virtue and religion, he has the happiness to know that the grace of Jesus Christ is "sufficient" for him—that the strength of his Redeemer is made perfect in weakness. Exposed as he may be to tribulation, persecution, or mental conflict, he still finds rest and satisfaction in submission to the divine will; and he is comforted by the settled conviction that all these

sufferings are the appointed means of his further purification, and are intended to work out for him an incomparably greater joy. And to this conviction is not unfrequently added that lively sense of the love of God, which spreads a delightful calm over his mind, and constitutes in itself the purest of pleasures. Lastly, for him even death is deprived of much of its bitterness and terror; for he is in possession of satisfying reasons for regarding it as the termination of every pain and sorrow, and as the sure introduction to never-ending peace.

The happiness of the true Christian, therefore, even in the present life, is of a very solid character. It is such as results from having his sins forgiven, his spiritual wants supplied, his moral diseases cured, his pains alleviated, his doubts and fears removed, his soul brought into peaceful communion with God, and his hopes, at times, full of immortality. But our view of the happiness procured for individuals through the medium of vital Christianity would be short and inadequate indeed, did we exclude from it that eternal felicity which is represented to us in the Scriptures as "the gift of God through Jesus Christ," and in comparison with which both the sorrows and the joys of this period of our probation sink into an almost total insignificance.

We cannot, indeed, make a full use of this branch of the subject, in the present argument, because our assurance of the reality of this eternal future depends on the truth of Christianity; and the truth of Christianity is that which we are endeavouring to prove. Nevertheless, it is a powerful internal evidence of the divine origin of our religion, that the heavenly state of being, of which it offers us the prospect, is no elysium of sensual delights, such as superstition has proposed, and such as it is perfectly natural for man to imagine; but a condition of absolute purity and spirituality, which may be described as the *proper element* of the refined and renovated soul, and into which the soundest reason must convince us that *nothing defiled can ever enter.*

Such then are the effects produced on mankind by

vital Christianity; but before I venture on an inference from these premises, I must request the reader's attention to a few general observations, which have an important connexion with our course of reasoning.

It is, in the first place, a very striking and confirming circumstance, that, since its promulgation by Jesus Christ and his apostles, that efficacious moral system which we have now been contemplating has continued *absolutely* unimproved. Sciences which originate in the exertion of human intellect, although probably never brought to perfection, are for the most part distinguished by a perpetual series of progressive changes. As the powers of man are enlarged by advancing cultivation, new discoveries are added to those of former days, and every succeeding generation finds, in the recorded acquirements of its predecessor, a vantage ground, by standing on which it is the better prepared for yet farther extending the boundaries of knowledge. But Christianity, regarded as a moral science, was promulgated by its divine author and his disciples, in a *condition of perfection*. To all the ends which it proposes, it is so exactly adapted, as to be capable (as far as appears to our limited comprehension) of no amelioration; and, although probably there is no subject in the world which has engaged the thoughts of so great a multitude of wise and serious persons, including many gifted with the *highest* intellectual powers, this science alone, of all those which have claimed the attention of mankind, has continued entirely stationary. I am aware that the rude hand of man has, at various times, either disfigured the sacred fabric of divine truth by unsightly and incongruous ornaments, or has endeavoured to deprive it of some of those fundamental parts which are essential to its maintenance; but, to that pure and unsophisticated system of religion and morals which was taught to mankind by the Son of God and his apostles, the profoundest reflections of a thousand uninspired theologians have added no improvement.

Perfect as *original* Christianity appears to be, considered as a system directed to the production of moral consequences, its perfection, in the second place,

is the more indicative of a divine origin, because many of the parts of which it consists are extraordinary, novel, and such as human philosophy could never have imagined. This observation applies with irresistible force to the whole doctrine of the redemption of mankind, through the incarnation, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of the Son of God; as well as to the application of that doctrine to practice, through the medium of faith working by love. These very leading points in our religion are placed far beyond the compass of mere human invention; and yet they are the very points on which, above all others, depends the practical and moral efficacy of the whole system.

Let it be observed, in the third place, that the Christian religion is of *universal applicability to mankind.* The conditions, characters, and circumstances of men present to our view an almost infinite diversity; but to the spiritual wants of them *all* our religion is perfectly suited. Whatever station we may occupy, whatever natural character we may possess, and in whatever circumstances we may be placed, true Christianity will ever be effectual in bringing us to a real peace with God, and to a just performance of all our personal and relative duties.

If it be objected that even nominal Christianity is at present spread over a very limited portion of the globe, the reply is obvious—that this fact is to be attributed, not to any want of suitableness in the Christian system to those who receive it, but to extrinsic causes, which have hitherto prevented or opposed its diffusion. And if it be further objected, that even in those parts of the world which are denominated Christian, the vital influence of our religion is manifested in comparatively few persons; we may remark again, that this fact is plainly to be ascribed, not to any defect either in the love of God or in the plan which he has instituted for our salvation, but to the depravity and perverseness of men, who are prone to cleave to their diseased condition, and who prefer darkness rather than light, *because their deeds are evil.* Were there discovered a medicine, which, when taken, would cure

every species of bodily disease in men of every possible description, it is evident that this remedy might justly be described as of universal applicability to mankind, although it might be known only to a few, and although it might be heartily received and carried into use by fewer still. Such a panacea for every species of spiritual disease, and for all sorts of men, is the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour; and, although we may mourn over the obstructions which impede its dissemination and counteract its influence, yet, if we reason aright on the subject, we cannot refuse to allow that it is free from all exclusive tendencies—that, in its scope, purpose, and practical operation, it is entirely and equally adapted to the whole human race.

As it is true, in the last place, that the practical consequences detailed in the present Essay never fail to be the result of genuine Christianity, so it is also true, to a very great extent, that they are the result of Christianity *alone*. Evident it must be, to every candid and serious observer, that neither heathenism, nor Mahometanism can pretend, with the least colour of truth, to the production of these admirable effects; for the former has been very generally accompanied by the grossest absurdities and corruptions; and the latter is so far from being morally curative, in its tendency, that, under particular circumstances, it openly fans both the violent and the voluptuous passions of our fallen nature. Neither can we perceive in the comparatively pure religion of the Jews (now they have rejected their own Messiah) the practical operation of those powerful principles, by which many of them were once enabled to glorify the God of their fathers, and to exalt among men the standard of true piety and virtue. In reference to that remarkable people, whatever allowance we may be disposed to make for them, it is impossible not to perceive that the *stream* of vital religion *has left its old channel dry*, and has now diffused itself among the many Gentile nations, which have received the Gospel of their Redeemer.

It is by no means my intention to assert that, in the various moral and religious systems with which I am now comparing Christianity, there is to be found no

portion of truth or rectitude. It is to be remembered, that mankind enjoyed an original revelation from God, of which faint traces are still very generally to be observed—that the spirit of the Lord, by which his law is written on the hearts of his creatures, is not confined in its operations, and may communicate light to the souls of men, independently of any external revelation—and lastly, that where Christianity is not received, it may still have obtained an indirect influence, and may be the real source of many correct and useful sentiments.

On these several grounds, therefore, we are not to be surprised when we trace, among some uncivilized heathen tribes, a plain recognition of the existence and unity of the Deity; nor when, amongst the most corrupt idolaters, we mark an acknowledgment of sin, and a pervading sense of their need of an atonement; nor when, in the pages of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, we meet with some true theology, and with many moral principles which Christians approve as their own; nor when we find modern infidels proclaiming a pure theism, and Mahomet and his followers teaching the unity of God, and the doctrine of future retribution.

In all these cases, the actual moral effect produced will be found to bear an analogy to the proportions of truth and error, of good and evil, of which the several systems in question are composed. In the purest of them, such as those of the ancient Platonic philosophers, and of the untutored American Indians, there may, in my opinion, be observed no unambiguous traces of a certain measure of divine illumination; but still there is a total absence of the grand peculiarities of the Gospel, and a corresponding incompleteness in the moral result. In Mahometanism and in modern infidelity, as well as in Judaism, as it is now maintained, there is an intentional and determined omission of those grand peculiarities; and the moral result appears to be this—that, notwithstanding the profession of a belief in one God, the *heart* is not mended, but generally continues in its original condition of barrenness, hardness, and corruption? Lastly,

with respect to the gross and varied idolatry which prevails over so large a portion of the globe, it appears to be productive of no other moral consequence than that of a deep and almost universal degradation.

Now, this is the strength and perfection of Christianity, that it omits every thing to be found in other moral and religious systems, which has any evil tendency; recognizes, embodies, and completes, all that is really good, and adds certain vast particulars of truth, absolutely peculiar to itself, by means of which it operates with a force altogether new on the souls of men, and obtains a moral efficacy for the production of piety, virtue, and happiness, which is impeded by no *intrinsic* counteraction—which is at once unrivalled and unalloyed.

In reverting to the heads of the present Essay, we are to recollect that we have been considering the effects produced in *real* believers by *pure* Christianity, considered as a whole, consisting of both preceptive and doctrinal parts. These effects are as follows:—that unregenerate man, who is ever prone to be ungodly and immoral, and is therefore ever liable to be miserable; is so transformed, that he is brought into the pious exercise of those dispositions and duties which are required towards the Almighty—that, in his personal character, and in his conduct towards his fellow-creatures, he becomes conformed to the image of his Creator, in imitation of the perfect pattern presented to him in Christ—and lastly, that he is introduced to substantial happiness, and to the hope of such a heavenly inheritance, as consists with the purity and perfection of God. We have, moreover, found occasion to remark that Christianity, regarded as a moral science, was revealed by our Lord and his apostles, in so perfect a state, as never to have received, since that period, the slightest improvement—that its characteristic features are, in various respects, novel, and such as human philosophy could not have imagined—that, however opposed and obstructed by circumstances, it is of universal applicability to mankind—and finally, that, on a fair comparison with other schemes of religion, it is found to contain all

which they have of good, to reject all which they have of evil, and, in point of moral efficacy, to stand unequalled and alone.

Now, what is the inference which the candid and serious reasoner must deduce from these premises? In my opinion, it is clearly this: that so extraordinary, so efficacious, so incomparable, a system—a system which, in its practical operation, is found to be entirely worthy of God, and exactly adapted to men, cannot be of earthly origin—that to suppose it to have been invented by a few illiterate fishermen, is to insinuate a proposition than which nothing more monstrous has ever been palmed on human credulity—that, in point of fact, like the beautiful and perfect works of nature, it can justly be ascribed only to the power, the wisdom, and the love, of the Deity himself.

Thus do we once more arrive at the sound conclusion, that *Christianity is the religion of God.* And since it is impossible that the God of all truth, in effecting the moral reformation, as well as the happiness, of his reasonable creatures, should employ a mere illusion, we may rest unalterably assured that Christianity, although it may contain some mysteries which we have no capacities to fathom, is *true*—that its doctrines are real, its hopes substantial, its promises sure, its joys unfading and eternal.

ESSAY V.

ON THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

SATISFIED, as I trust we now are, of the divine origin of that holy religion, of which the Law was the introduction, and the Gospel the perfect revelation, it still remains for us to examine a very important question; namely, whether the *record* of our religion, contained in the Old and New Testaments, is *also* to be regarded as of divine origin—in other words, whether the Holy Scriptures were given by inspiration of God?

It is much to be regretted that some persons, who acknowledge the truth of Christianity, nevertheless appear to entertain unsatisfactory views, or are at least perplexed with considerable doubt and obscurity, in reference to this subject. For my own part, I have long been persuaded that the important question now proposed may safely be answered, as the generality of Christian theologians have long been accustomed to answer it, with a clear affirmative. The grounds of that persuasion I shall endeavour concisely to unfold in the present Essay.

We are, in the first place, in possession of a strong antecedent probability of the divine authority of the Scriptures. The principal object of the revelations acknowledged by Christians was to unfold certain doctrines, and to promulgate certain moral principles. These doctrines and principles were, for the most part, intended for permanent and general use among men; and Scripture is the principal means appointed, in the

providence of God, by which they are handed down from generation to generation, and by which a knowledge of them is diffused over the world at large. Now, had the writers on whom it devolved to compose the various parts of this Sacred Volume been left to the unassisted exercise of their natural powers, and to the frailty of mere human memory, the revelations themselves, however certainly divine in their origin, would have become comparatively useless: the message of God could not fail to have been obscured and impaired by the infirmity and ignorance of those who delivered it; nor could we, under such circumstances, have been required to yield to it (especially in its deeper and more mysterious parts) that implicit belief and obedience, without which no one can participate in the blessings and privileges of true religion. Since, then, in order to the accomplishment of those ends to which revelation *declares itself* to be directed, the inspiration of the record, as one link in the chain, appears, on very obvious principles, to have been absolutely indispensable, and since, in the works of the Deity, there is no shortness and inconsistency, it must evidently be deemed in a very high degree probable, *a priori*, that the record was really inspired.

In considering the positive evidences, by which this antecedent probability is confirmed, and by which the divine authority of the Bible is, in my opinion, ascertained, I shall commence with the Old Testament.

1. We have already found occasion to remark, that, before the coming of the Messiah, the Hebrew Scriptures had been formed into a canon, were carefully preserved in the archives of the temple, and were publicly read in the synagogues of the Jews. Now, it is certain that the Sacred Volume, which was the object of so much care and attention among that people, was universally considered by them to be of divine origin and authority. The reverence with which the early Jews regarded the Hebrew Scriptures was evinced, not only by the titles which they applied to them, such as "the books of holiness," "the holy

thing of the Lord," but also by certain practices of a ceremonial nature. It was their custom to kiss the Bible on opening and shutting it, and ever to place it at the top of all other books; nor was it considered lawful to have recourse to it with unwashen hands: *see Leusden, Philol. Hebr.* diss. i. sect. 1. Philo, the Jewish philosopher, who was cotemporary with Christ, and was deeply versed in the books of the Old Testament, styles them, in various parts of his works, *the sacred writings, the oracle of God;* and, in his numerous quotations from both the historical and prophetical parts of the Bible, he very generally notices the *divine authority* of that which he cites. Josephus also, in his work against Apion, has written on this important subject, in very decisive terms: 'These writings,' he says, in speaking of the Hebrew Scriptures, 'contain an account of all time, and are justly held to be divine. It is proved, by experience, in what degree we have faith in the writings which belong to us; for, although so long a period has now elapsed since they were composed, no one has been so daring as to add any thing to them, or to take any thing away from them. But, it is a common principle, imbibed by all the Jews from their very birth, to consider them as *the doctrines of God*, to abide by them, and, if need be, willingly to die for them.' lib. i. cap. 8.

That the sentiments thus prevalent among the early Jews respecting the divine authority of the Old Testament were correct, appears from the testimony of Jesus Christ and his apostles—a testimony which relates to so plain a subject, which is so worked into the Gospel narrative, and which is so frequently and variously given, that its validity cannot be reasonably disputed by any persons who have already admitted that the New Testament is genuine and authentic, and that Christianity is the religion of God. The declarations of Jesus Christ, in reference to such a point, must be fully admitted to be true by all who acknowledge his divine mission; and, with regard to the apostles, without any consideration, in the present stage of our argument, of the fact of their inspiration, it is only reasonable to conclude, that

they derived their doctrine on the subject from that celestial teacher, to whose service they were entirely devoted.

Our Lord, in his discourses, and the evangelists and apostles, in their writings, have made frequent mention of *the Scriptures;* and it must be evident, to every attentive reader of the New Testament, that, when they employed this term, they did not refer to writings in general, but solely to that particular collection of writings which was held sacred by the Jews, and which, by way of preeminence, was so denominated.

Now, from the *manner* in which they quoted from the Scriptures, it is easy to perceive that Jesus and his disciples fully coincided with the Jews, to whom, for the most part, they addressed themselves, respecting the divine authority of these sacred books. On various occasions, and more especially when his own person, character, and history, were the subjects of discussion, the Lord Jesus was accustomed to appeal to the contents of the Old Testament, as affording an unquestionable evidence of the truth. It was the Scriptures, he declared, which testified of himself: John v. 39. "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you," said he to his disciples, "that all things *must* be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures:" Luke xxiv. 44, 45; *see also* Matt. xxi. 42. xxvi. 54, &c. Not only, indeed, did our Lord elucidate, by the declarations of the Old Testament, the events which were then occuring, but sometimes he described the events themselves, as happening for *the very purpose that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: see* John xv. 25. xvii. 12; *comp.* Matt. viii. 17, &c. Nor was it merely to the statements of the Old Testament, respecting himself, that Jesus appealed as prophetically true, and therefore of divine origin. There were occasions on which he cited Scripture, as the decisive authority in reference to other points of doctrinal or practical importance. Thus, when

discoursing with the Sadducees on the subject of a future life, he traced their error of opinion to their ignorance of Scripture, and then confuted them by citing a passage from the book of Exodus: Matt. xxii. 32. Again, when the Jews accused him of blasphemy, because he said he was the Son of God, he silenced their cavils by an appeal to the Sacred Volume, and added an emphatic and most important declaration: "*The Scripture cannot be broken:*" John x. 34, 35; *see also* Mark xi. 17; Luke x. 26.

The apostles and evangelists, in their method of citing from the Old Testament, have closely followed the example of their divine Master. Thus, when writing on the nature and importance of faith, Paul thus rests his argument on the authority of Holy Writ: "For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness:" Rom. iv. 3. So the apostle Peter, after enforcing the necessity of coming to Jesus Christ, as to a living stone, adds, "Wherefore also is it contained in the Scripture, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone,'" &c. 1 Pet. ii. 6; and James, when describing the origin of wars and fightings—the lusts or evil passions of men—confirms his proposition by similar evidence: "Do ye think the Scripture saith in vain, 'The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy:'" iv. 5; *compare* Acts xviii. 28; Romans ix. 17. xi. 8, &c.

Upon all these and many other similar passages in the Gospels and Epistles, it is necessary to make two observations. *First*, that, in thus quoting from the Old Testament, Jesus Christ and his apostles made no invidious distinctions respecting the particular books of which it was composed. The historical and the prophetical parts of the Bible were alike the object of their deference, the standard of their doctrine; and although, in most of the instances in which they made mention of the Scriptures, they had in their view particular passages of the Bible, there is reason to believe that they adduced these passages as decisive, not because they flowed from the pen of any particular author, but because they formed a part of that class

of writings—that sacred and unalterable collection —to which, by way of distinction, was applied the name of "Scripture." *Secondly*, we can scarcely fail to remark, that, like Christians in the present day, they appealed to the Scriptures as to a source of certain information, a paramount indisputable authority, on all subjects connected with religious truth; nor could such an appeal have arisen from any thing short of a full admission that these holy books were really of divine origin, or given by inspiration of God.

That such was, in fact, the impression under which their appeal was made, is confirmed by apostolic testimony, of a yet more positive nature. When speaking of the prophets who wrote the Old Testament, Peter declares that it was the Spirit of Christ within them which testified of the future coming of our Lord, 1 Peter i. 11; and again he says, that "these holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:" 2 Peter i. 21. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the words of David and Jeremiah are cited, without any express reference to those writers, simply as the words of the Holy Ghost: chap. iii. 7; x. 15. But it is the second Epistle of Paul to Timothy which presents to us the most important passage, in reference to the present subject—a passage luminous in itself, and, when considered in connexion with the collateral evidence already stated, completely convincing on the point in question. "But continue thou," says the apostle to his son in the truth, "in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the *Holy Scriptures*, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works:" 2 Tim. iii. 14—17.

It has been observed, that the latter part of this passage is capable of being otherwise rendered,

"Every writing, given by inspiration of God, is also profitable," &c. Now, if we adopt this translation, (which I would submit does not so properly represent the Greek as the version commonly received) the passage will still afford a clear evidence of the divine origin of Scripture. It is surely undeniable that, by "every writing given by inspiration of God," (if such can be deemed the right version of his words) the apostle intended to express all those writings which, in the preceding verse, he denominated the *Holy Scriptures;* and it is equally certain that, by these latter expressions, he described the canon of writings received as divine by the Jews; that is to say, the *Old Testament.* Whether, therefore, we understand the apostle as making a direct assertion, or only as elucidating by an epithet his notion of Scripture, we plainly learn from him that *the Old Testament was given by inspiration of God.*

II. Let us now proceed to consider the question before us, as it relates to the *New Testament.*

Since every divine revelation, intended for permanent utility among men, so obviously requires a divine Scripture, and since it actually pleased God, as is proved by the testimony of Jesus Christ and his apostles, to substantiate the revelations recorded in the Old Testament, by placing the stamp of his own authority on the writings which compose it, little doubt can reasonably be entertained that the final and more important revelation was attended by the same advantage. If the dispensations of God, revealed to mankind under the law, which were chiefly of an introductory nature, required a Scripture, through which the account of them might be handed down from generation to generation, on the authority of God himself; how much more did the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which developed the completion of those dispensations, demand a similar security? Can we for a moment imagine that, in the one case, a divine Scripture would be granted, and, in the other, denied, to mankind; or that the full discovery of divine truth would be exposed, in its delivery to the world, to that fatal admixture of human error and infirmity, from

which the preparatory revelations were so effectually protected?

The conclusion to which we are led by this obvious argument from analogy, respecting the divine authority of the New Testament, is confirmed by the positive evidence afforded us in its authentic narrative, that the apostles of Jesus Christ, who were the authors of the greater part of the volume, were directly inspired. When, during his own life and ministry, Jesus sent forth his apostles to preach and to work miracles in his name, he taught them that the Spirit of their Father was to speak in them. "And ye shall be brought before governors and kings," said the Saviour to them, "for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but *the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you:*" Matt. x. 18—20. The promises of that divine influence, which was to form so distinguishing a feature of the Christian dispensation, were personally addressed to these highly-favoured servants of the Lord; and were unquestionably applicable to them, with an especial degree of force. "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you:" John xiv. 26. "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high:" Luke xxiv. 49. Lastly, the event to which the expectation of the apostles was thus directed is so exactly described in the Book of Acts, that, even were we in possession of no collateral evidence of their inspiration, we could reasonably entertain no doubts on the subject. We read, that when they were assembled together on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost descended, and rested upon them in the likeness of cloven tongues of fire. Immediately they were endued, in a plenary manner, with supernatural gifts: they spake in foreign languages, of which they had till then been ignorant; and, with unparal-

leled success, they unfolded to the multitudes the truths of the Gospel, under the positive and professed influence of direct inspiration: Acts ii. 1—11.

Now, it is evident that the apostles were thus inspired in order to the *dissemination of religious truth:* and it will be admitted that, for this purpose, their writings were of an importance at least equal to that of their preaching. Their preaching answered the great purposes of the day, and served for the introduction of Christianity into the world. Their writings were equally essential to its maintenance, and were the appointed means of conveying divine instruction to a long series of successive generations. It is certain, therefore, that the supernatural effusion of the Spirit was required for their *writing* still more, if possible, than for their *preaching:* and the declarations of the New Testament, that it was actually directed to the latter object, afford a sufficient evidence (when the *purpose* of the gift is considered) that it was extended also to the former.

It was evidently on this ground that Paul and Peter commenced their Epistles, by declaring their apostleship—a declaration which the former was accustomed to strengthen by very emphatic additions:—"Called to be an apostle, *separated unto the* Gospel of God:" Rom. i. 1. "An apostle of Jesus Christ, *by the will of God:*" 2 Cor. i. 1. "*Not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead:*" Gal. i. 1. The obvious intention of the apostle, in making use of these expressions, was to magnify his office, and to evince that the doctrine which he was about to promulgate rested not upon his own authority, but upon that of the divine Master whom he served. Accordingly we find him, in other parts of his Epistles, declaring not merely that his *preaching* was "in demonstration of the Spirit and power," but that his *writings* also were of divine origin. "If any man," said he, "think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord:" 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

Nor was the authority thus claimed by Paul, as

attaching to the contents of his Epistles, higher than that which was attributed to them by his brethren. "Account that the long-suffering of our Lord," said the apostle Peter, "is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also *the other Scriptures*, unto their own destruction:" 2 Peter iii. 15, 16. From this passage we again learn that Paul wrote not according to his own mind, but according to *the wisdom given to him;* and further, that his Epistles formed a part of those sacred writings which were allowed to be of divine origin, and which, by way of preeminence, were denominated then, as they are now, *the Scriptures.* As it was with Paul, so unquestionably must it have been with the other apostles. Immediate inspiration was common to them all; and the sacred influence under which they wrote, as well as preached, was such as imparted to their genuine compositions an undoubted claim to be reckoned with "*the other Scriptures.*"

The inspiration of the apostles, it is to be remembered, was of no subordinate or secondary description. That it was high in its degree, and plenary in its operation, may be concluded from a fact, of which we have already noticed the credibility, and which by Christians is universally admitted to be true—namely, *that they were endued with the power of working miracles.* "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them," (the apostles), says the evangelist Mark, "he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, *the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following:*" ch. xvi. 19, 20; *comp.* Heb. ii. 3, 4. Miracles wrought by a teacher of religion are allowed to be an unquestionable sign that the doctrine which he promulgates in connection with them is of divine authority. The Lord Jesus appealed to his own miracles, in proof that he was sent of his Father; and Christians are still unanimous in

receiving them as a conclusive evidence of the same truth. Thus it was also with the apostles: the *work* of God confirmed the *word* of God; the signs and wonders which the Lord wrought by them afforded a sufficient and satisfactory proof that it was *he* also who inspired their doctrine, in whatsoever form that doctrine was communicated to mankind.

Thus far we have adverted solely to that major part of the New Testament which was written by the apostles. Does the same character of inspiration, it may be asked, attach to the remaining part of that volume; namely, to the writings of Mark and Luke?

From the testimony of Eusebius, who describes the Gospel of Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles, as 'two divinely-inspired books,'—from that of the Council of Laodicea (A. D. 365), which included them, together with the Gospel of Mark, in the canon of Scripture,—and from some other documents of yet greater antiquity,—we learn that these writings were received by the early Christian church as of an authority not inferior to that of the rest of the New Testament: *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* lib. III. 4; *Lardner*, 4to edit. vol. ii. p. 414; *Iren. adv. Hær.* lib. iii. cap. i. Accordingly, the evidence adduced to prove that the rest of the New Testament was given by inspiration, although of most certain application to the writings of the apostles, are by no means inapplicable to those of Mark and Luke. The high and extraordinary endowments of the Spirit, during the earliest periods of Christianity, were by no means confined to the apostles of Jesus Christ. Our Lord sent forth his seventy disciples, as well as his twelve apostles, endued with the power of working miracles. The deacons were men *full* of the Holy Ghost; and Stephen, in particular, was gifted in a very eminent degree, with supernatural powers: Acts vi. 8. On the day of Pentecost there were no less than one hundred and twenty persons assembled together; "and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance:" Acts ii. 4. It is evident, therefore, that, on the first introduction of Christianity, many persons,

besides the apostles, possessed those supernatural endowments which rendered them fit instruments for the peculiar work of establishing a new religion in the world; nor were there, we may presume, any individuals more likely to enjoy those endowments than Mark and Luke; the one, the beloved companion of Peter (1 Peter v. 13); the other, the intimate and celebrated associate of Paul: 2 Cor. viii. 18.[3]

In support of our position, that the New Testament was given by inspiration, there remains to be adduced another external evidence of no inconsiderable importance; namely, the *universal consent* of the *Christian church;* for, respecting the divine authority of all the acknowledged writings of the evangelists and apostles, there appears to have prevailed among Christians, in ancient times, the same clearness and general accordance of sentiment as in the present day. The judgment of the early church, on this subject, may be collected from a variety of sources: viz. from direct declarations in the works of the fathers —from canons of *Holy Scripture*, published both by individuals and by general councils—from the usage established so early as the second century, of reading the New as well as the Old Testament in their public assemblies for worship—and lastly, from the practice, so universally prevalent among the fathers, even at a very early date, of quoting passages from the New Testament, as of decisive and divine authority, for the

[3] A minute investigation of the subject will, I believe, go far towards satisfying every impartial inquirer, that the *Epistle to the Hebrews* was written by Paul. It is probably to that Epistle particularly that the apostle Peter referred, when he classed the writings of Paul with the *other Scriptures;* and, if Paul was its author, its canonical authority is, of course, unquestionable. On the less probable supposition, however, that Paul was not its author, there is still good reason to believe that this Epistle was given by inspiration. Addressed, as it was, during the apostolic age, to the parent church at Jerusalem, it is distinguished by an exalted tone of authority, and even of rebuke, upon which, it may be presumed, no one in those favoured days would have ventured, who was not known to have enjoyed especial inspiration: and this inference is satisfactorily confirmed by the doctrinal importance and remarkable practical weight of the treatise itself.

settlement of all questions connected with religious truth.[4]

Now, this general consent of the Christian church, during the several periods of its history, to the doctrine that the writings of the apostles and evangelists (like those of the patriarchs and prophets) are *Holy Scripture*,—that is, that they were given by inspiration of God,—affords a strong presumption that the evi-

[4] From the commencement of the third century, the testimonies of the church to the divine authority of the New Testament extend and multiply in every direction; but it is of particular importance to observe, that even during the first and second centuries the same principle was plainly recognized. A few instances will elucidate and justify the assertion. The author of that very ancient Epistle which is supposed by many persons to be the genuine production of Barnabas, prefaces his citation of Matt. xx. 16, by the words, "as it is written,"—words which, throughout the New Testament itself, designate quotation from the inspired writings: *Lardner*, 4to. vol. i. 285. Clement of Rome, (A. D. 96) in addressing the Corinthians, appeals to the authority of "the Epistle of the blessed apostle Paul," who, he says, wrote to them "by the Spirit:" chap. xlvii. *Lardner*, i. 293. Polycarp, (A. D. 108) in his Epistle to the Philippians, thus refers to Ephes. iv. 26: 'For I trust ye are well exercised in the *Sacred Writings*; for in those Scriptures it is said, "Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath:"' chap. xii. *Lardner* i. 327. Hegesippus (A. D. 173) quotes Matt. xiii. 16, as from the *divine Scriptures*: *Photii Biblioth.* 893; *Lardner* i. 358. Theophilus of Antioch (A. D. 181) quotes John i. 1, and Rom. xiii. 7, 8, as from the *Holy Scriptures* and the *divine Word*: *Lardner* i. 385, 386. Clement of Alexandria (A. D. 194) abounds in citations from almost all the books of the New Testament, and he expressly denominates those books, *Scripture*, *divine Scripture*, *divinely-inspired Scripture*, *the Scriptures of the Lord*, *the true evangelical canon*: *Lardner* i. 405. Lastly, we may adduce the testimony of Irenæus, (A. D. 178) that most eminent of the early fathers of the western church, who is not only abundant in his quotations from the New Testament, but asserts that the evangelists and apostles, after having preached the Gospel, 'handed it down to us, by the will of God, in their writings, to be the *foundation and pillar* of our faith:' *Adv. Hær.* lib. III. cap. i. *Lardner* i. 365. It is evident that the writings thus handed down could be regarded by Irenæus as the foundation and pillar of our faith only on the principle that their authors were actually inspired. Accordingly, that writer adds, 'He who refuses his assent to them, (the apostles and evangelists) despises not only those who knew the mind of the Lord, but the Lord Christ himself, and the Father.'

dences on which that doctrine was originally established were plain, reasonable, and convincing; nor can any thing appear to the mind of the Christian much more improbable than that a sentiment so universally admitted by his fellow-believers in all ages, and so clearly held by them all to be essential to the fabric of their faith, should have no other foundation than error.

III. Such are some of the external evidences (derived principally from the Gospels and Epistles, considered only as genuine and authentic works) which lead to the conclusion that both the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God. And now, before we proceed to consider some additional proofs of a different description, it may be desirable to offer a few remarks respecting the nature of that inspiration which the sacred writers enjoyed. Much discussion has arisen among theologians, respecting the degree in which it was imparted, and the mode in which it operated; and the distinctions which have been formed on the subject are at once refined and numerous.

Inspiration, I would submit, is the communication to the minds of men of a divine light and influence, by which they are either miraculously informed of matters before unknown to them, or by which ideas already acquired through natural means are presented to their memory, and impressed on their feelings, with an extraordinary degree of clearness and force; and by which, further, they are often led to promulgate to others, either in speaking or in writing, that which has been thus imparted to themselves. Such being a general definition of inspiration, it must evidently vary in degree, and in the method of its operation, according to the circumstances under which it acts, and the subjects to which it is applied.

When the ideas communicated to the inspired person, and by the inspired person to others, were altogether new, and his knowledge of them obtained only through an immediate and supernatural discovery, it seems probable that the very words in which those ideas were communicated to others must also have been suggested by the Holy Spirit. Such I conceive to have

been the case with the prophets, when they found themselves constrained to predict events which were not only concealed in the bosom of futurity, but were of so singular a nature, that they were probably very little understood by those who predicted them: *see, for example*, Isa. vii. 14; ix. 6; liii. Such also may probably have been the case with Moses when he described the creation of the world, and with the apostles when they communicated to their disciples those doctrinal mysteries, of which their knowledge was derived exclusively or principally from immediate revelation. But, as far as relates to the more simple didactic parts of Scripture, as well as to the greater part of its historical narrative, we may presume that the sentiments and facts impressed upon the minds of the writers were promulgated by them in their own words, under the especial and extraordinary *superintendence* of that divine Remembrancer, who by no means superseded their natural talents and acquired knowledge, but enlarged, strengthened, protected, and applied them.[5] Now, although the inspiration, under which the several parts of Scripture were written, may have been differently modified, according to their respective characteristics, yet, if these premises are correct, we may safely deduce from them the general inference, that *the whole contents of the Bible are of divine authority.*

Some little exception, however, attaches to this general inference, as it relates to the Epistles of Paul, which were all of them addressed either to particular churches, or to individuals. Since, notwithstanding his inspiration, the natural situation of the apostle

[5] It is obvious that the inspiration of the sacred writers did not prevent their making use both of the dialects, and of the styles, to which they were severally accustomed. In the case of the inspiration of *superintendence*, this was to be expected. And even in that of actual verbal inspiration, it can be no matter of just surprise, that the divine communication should be made to the inspired person, *under that form* which was the most familiar and intelligible to himself. The object of inspiration is not the improvement of language, or the perfecting of eloquence; but the promulgation of divine truth. And yet, what writers are more eloquent than some of the prophets and apostles?

continued unaltered, he was undoubtedly at liberty to reply to the inquiries of his friends, to the best of his ability, even on points respecting which he had received no direct illumination from his divine Master. Accordingly, in part of his reply to certain practical questions addressed to him by his disciples at Corinth, we find him expressly declaring, that he delivers not the commandments of the Lord, but the conclusions of his own judgment: 1 Cor. vii. On this subject it needs only be remarked, that the care which the apostle has displayed in marking those particulars of his answer, in which it was not the Lord who spake, but himself, affords a powerful confirmation of other more positive evidences that, in the rest of his religious communications, it was not he that spake, *but the Lord.*

But there are other passages in Paul's Epistles, respecting which the apostle has made no such distinction, but for which, since they relate to matters of a circumstantial and subordinate description—such as, the salutation of many individuals, the course of his intended journeys, and commissions to be executed—it is supposed that inspiration was wholly needless. Since, however, there is nothing in these passages inconsistent with truth, there is nothing in them which *proves* that the apostle, when he wrote them, was not inspired; and, since even these parts of his Epistles are by no means destitute of practical importance, it is not unreasonable to suppose that they were actually written under a divine influence proportioned to the occasion. There are few or none of them from which we may not derive some lesson of Christian kindness, courtesy, and friendship; and, inferior as they may be considered when compared with other more essential parts of the apostle's writings, they nevertheless fall in with the harmony of divine truth, and help to constitute that perfect whole, which every impartial observer must trace to the hand of God.

It is, in the second place, urged as an objection against the universal inspiration of Scripture, that a considerable diversity of statement, and sometimes

an appearance of actual contradiction, is to be observed in reference to several minor particulars, in the historical narratives of the four evangelists. On the subject of this objection, the limits of the present work preclude my entering at large. I would remark, however, that the inspiration of the evangelists by no means prevented the use of their natural observation and acquired information—that hence, in the selection of their subjects, and in their mode of narration, considerable variety would necessarily arise—that the same scene might be presented to different witnesses in different points of view ; and that the several parts of that scene would of course be impressed on them respectively, with different degrees of force—that most of the apparent contradictions referred to in the objection have been satisfactorily reconciled on critical grounds—and that the few which cannot now be so readily explained would probably be found, were all the circumstances precisely known, to involve no real error. On the whole, therefore, we may safely accede to the sentiments of Archbishop Newcome, who, in the preface to his harmony of the Greek Testament, expresses himself as follows : 'The result of my thoughts and inquiries is, that every genuine proposition in Scripture, whether doctrinal or historical, contains a truth, when it is rightly understood ; that the evangelists conceived alike of the facts related by them, but sometimes place them in different lights, and make a selection of different circumstances accompanying them ; and that their seeming variations would instantly vanish, were the history known to us in its precise order, and in all its circumstances.' [6]

[6] It has been remarked, in a former Essay, that the *apparent* differences in the narratives of the four evangelists have served an invaluable purpose in promoting the cause of Christianity ; for they afford a decisive evidence that the four Gospels, (plainly coincident as they are with respect to all matters of importance) have proceeded from witnesses essentially independent of one another, and that, therefore, the history which they contain is credible and true. Might not this be the very reason why such apparent differences were permitted to exist, and why the inspiration of the evangelists was not so directed as to prevent them ? A similar inquiry applies to those familiar parts of Paul's Epistles

Now, if there be nothing trivial in the Epistles of Paul, and nothing really erroneous in the Gospels, the objections made on the opposite supposition, to the divine origin of the whole Scriptures, will fall to the ground at once. Let us, however, take up that opposite supposition, and grant, for a moment, that one or more of the evangelists have actually fallen into mistake, in their statement of some minor circumstances, and that certain parts of Paul's Epistles are so absolutely destitute of weight, that they *could* not have been given by inspiration. Such facts, if facts they were, could not be pleaded against the divine authority of the Bible *in general.* We are in possession of positive evidence, of a highly satisfactory nature, that the writers of the Scriptures were inspired, and inspired *for the purpose of promulgating religious truth;* and this evidence is by no means counteracted by the supposed circumstance, that, in the composition of certain small parts of their works, *considered to be non-essential in reference to that object,* they were left to the unassisted exercise of their natural powers. As far as the great practical purposes of Scripture are concerned, it appears from our premises to be unquestionable that these sacred authors wrote under the immediate and extraordinary influence of the Holy Ghost. These purposes are, "doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction, in righteousness." Every thing, therefore, in the Bible, whether historical or didactic, essentially connected with the promulgation of religious truth; every thing which has a practical bearing; every thing which is important for doctrine, reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness; every thing which affects those questions in morals and divinity, which Christians are accustomed to submit to the decision of Scripture; remains unalterably stamped with the seal of divine inspiration.

which are deemed by some persons below the mark of inspiration; for the comparison of some of these very passages with others in the book of Acts has established, on the clearest grounds, the credibility of that important history, as well as the genuineness of the apostle's letters.

IV. We may now proceed briefly to consider some of the principal *internal* evidences of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

The precision, in the first place, with which so many of the prophecies contained in the Bible have been fulfilled, not only affords a proof that the religion which these prophecies attest is divine, but may also be considered as strongly indicating, that the very words in which they have been handed down by Scripture, from generation to generation, proceeded from the Spirit of God.

On a similar ground, in the second place, the arguments employed to prove the divine origin of *Christianity*, from the wisdom of its moral law, and from the weight of its doctrines, evince, with no less clearness, that of the *Christian Scriptures*. We believe that the Bible was given by inspiration, because, in the Bible only are originally recorded that pure and perfect law, those exalted principles of piety and devotion, and that Gospel placed far beyond the scope of human discovery, and yet entirely adapted to the wants of mankind, which are in themselves—from their own peculiar and intrinsic excellence—sufficient to satisfy every serious inquirer, that our religion has proceeded from God. Here, more especially, it ought to be remarked, that the Holy Scriptures are distinguished from all other writings, by the wonderfully comprehensive information which they impart to us respecting the true character of the Supreme Being himself. Although some important traces of that character may be found, as has already been remarked, in the pages of ancient heathen philosophy, it is in the Bible only that the Deity is portrayed, with any thing like an adequate degree of clearness, in all his glorious attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, holiness, justice, wisdom, and love. And hence we derive a specific and very substantial evidence, that, of this Sacred Volume, God himself was the author.

Another evidence that the Scriptures were given by inspiration arises from that unbroken spiritual harmony which prevails among the sacred writers—a harmony the more astonishing, because those writers

were numerous, lived at many and distant periods, and were often very little connected with one another. One sacred tone of sentiment pervades the whole volume of the Bible; and if there are any statements in it, on points of doctrine, apparently contradictory, (such as those of the apostles Paul and James, on the subject of justification) they are found, on closer investigation, to make up together a perfect whole, and to rest on the same unalterable principles. It forms no real exception to the observation now offered, that divine truth was *progressive*, and that more abundant light, on both moral and doctrinal points, was enjoyed by the writers of the New than by those of the Old Testament. The progress of divine truth may, indeed, be regarded as one of the principal characteristics of the harmony of Scripture. How perfect, for example, is the adaptation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is revealed in the New Testament, to the injunctions of the law, and to the declarations of the prophets! In such an adaptation, and in the substantial accordance subsisting amongst all the component parts of the Bible, what Christian does not perceive a conclusive evidence, that the writers of that sacred volume, distinguished as they were from one another by differences of talent, character, and circumstance, were all instructed by the same Heavenly Guide to promulgate, in its several successive stages, the same essential and efficacious system of vital religion?

The harmony of Scripture is the more admirable, because it accompanies an almost endless diversity of subject. In the history which the Bible presents to us of events connected with religion, and of the people of God, from the beginning of the world—in its account of the moral government of the Deity, commencing in this life, and completed in the life to come—in its representations of a multitude of characters, some intended for example, and others for warning—in its descriptions of religious experience—in its exercises of devotion, its prayers, praises, and thanksgivings—in its types, prophecies, and doctrines—in its holy and heavenly law—in its luminous statements respecting the attributes of the Almighty—in its

manifold delineations of that Saviour, of whom the patriarchs, the prophets, and the apostles, unite in testifying—we are furnished with an inexhaustible variety of divine instruction, with which the spiritual mind is continually refreshed and nourished, but never satiated.

In accordance with this observation, it only remains for me to adduce, in evidence of the divine origin of the Scriptures, the *practical effect which (under the influence of the Spirit) they actually produce:* namely, the conversion of sinners, and the sanctification and edification of believers. As these effects are to be attributed primarily to God, as their author, and secondarily to Christianity, as the religious system which he has adapted to these ends, so are they found, in a multitude of instances, to arise immediately out of the use of that holy book, in which Christianity is embodied. The Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation, "through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Such is the declaration of an apostle, and such is the fact. Now, the believer who experiences this effect to be produced in his mind, and is able to trace it to the Bible as the *instrumental cause*, enjoys an evidence that the Sacred Volume has proceeded from God, which is entirely satisfactory to himself, and of which the most ingenious arguments and cavils will never be able to dispossess him. He finds in that volume a mine of wisdom, from which he is constantly deriving instruction, consolation, and spiritual improvement. He resorts to it as to his daily food; he reverts again and again to the same passages, without any wearisome sense of sameness, and seldom without deriving from them important practical lessons, with which he was before less perfectly acquainted. Thus is he encouraged and strengthened to pursue his Christian course; and the more his knowledge of divine things, and the limits of his own religious experience, are extended—the more fully is he persuaded that the contents of Scripture are no cunningly devised fables, but celestial truths. *He finds in himself a witness of their reality.*

It may indeed be observed, that the evidence of the

divine origin of Scripture, which the Christian derives from the source now mentioned, is, in some measure, confined to himself; because he obtains it chiefly by watching the condition and progress of his own mind. But this is not the case altogether; for the tree is known by its fruits. It is matter of external observation, when the sinner is turned from the error of his ways, the proud man humbled, and the Christian character formed. It cannot be concealed from others, when the designed effect of an acquaintance with Scripture is actually produced in the individual; when "the man of God is perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works:" nor can any one who entertains a just notion of the moral attributes of the Supreme Being refuse, under such circumstances, to confess that the writings, from the use of which these consequences result, have originated in the power, the wisdom, and the love of God.

Religious instruction is, indeed, communicated through a variety of channels besides the Scriptures; such as the more modern writings of pious Christians, and especially the ministry of the Gospel. But the good effect produced by these means affords additional strength to the argument now stated; because they are found by experience to be efficacious for the purposes of conversion and edification, *only* in as much as they present to the mind the truths already revealed to us in the Bible. It is no inconclusive evidence of the divine origin of the Scriptures, that in them we find both the *foundation* and the *boundaries* of all secondary means of religious improvement. That the ministry of the Gospel ought to be exercised under the immediate direction of the great head of the Church, is a principle which will probably be allowed by many pious Christians; yet we are not to forget that, when that ministry is most spiritual in its origin, it is still found to dwell on the declarations of Scripture. The purest gifts of the Spirit, as they are now administered, are almost exclusively directed to the application of those materials which originated in a higher and more plenary operation of the same divine influence. Thus, also, the sentiments which chiefly edify in the

writings of modern Christians are precisely those sentiments which, in their original form, have been expressed by prophets and apostles. It is divine truth, as applied to the heart of man by the Spirit of God, which converts, sanctifies, and edifies; and of this *divine truth* the only authorized record—a record at once original and complete—is the BIBLE.

Let us now briefly recapitulate the argument of the present Essay.

It being an established point, that Christianity is the religion of God, we are in possession of a strong antecedent probability that the books by means of which that religion was appointed to be handed down from generation to generation, are of divine authority.

That the Old Testament was given by inspiration, we learn from the testimonies, whether more or less direct, of Jesus Christ and his apostles.

That the New Testament was also of divine origin, we may therefore conclude, from analogy.

This conclusion is confirmed by the positive evidences which the authentic narrative of the New Testament affords, that the apostles who wrote the greater part of it were inspired; and that their inspiration was of a very exalted kind, we infer from the acknowledged fact that they wrought miracles.

It is highly probable, and under all circumstances nearly certain, that similar endowments were enjoyed by Mark and Luke, the only writers of the New Testament who were not apostles.

Inspiration was bestowed on the writers of Scripture in various measures according to circumstances—yet in such a manner, that the whole contents of the Bible (exclusive of a few passages in his writings, expressly excepted by the apostle Paul) are to be regarded as of divine authority.

If however it be supposed, that, in the composition of certain subordinate parts of their works, some of the sacred writers were left to the unassisted exercise of their natural powers, every thing in the Scriptures essentially connected with religious truth (for the promulgation of which its authors were inspired) is nevertheless unquestionably of divine origin. Lastly, that

the Bible was given by inspiration, is plainly indicated by the exact fulfilment of its prophecies; by the purity of its law, and the wisdom of its doctrines; by its wonderful moral harmony, in the midst of almost endless variety; and by its practical effects, as the divinely-appointed means of conversion and religious edification.

Having thus considered some of the principal evidences which evince that the Christian Scriptures have the same divine origin as the revelations which they record, we may henceforth consider the Bible as identified with those revelations; and, in searching for that which has been *revealed*, we need no longer hesitate in directing our attention to that which is *written*. I cannot, however, satisfactorily conclude the present disquisition, without offering to the reader's attention, by way of corollary to my argument, a few general propositions.

1. Since the authority of divine revelation is, on the subject to which it relates, paramount to all other authority, and since the subject of the Christian revelation is religious truth, it follows that, on all questions connected with religious truth, the clear decisions of Scripture are not only sufficient, but *final*.

2. It is evident that the Scriptures, like every other book, must be interpreted according to the received rules of criticism and philology; but, since they are a divine source of information on all points connected with Christian doctrine, and since the declarations of God are unspeakably superior, in point of validity, to the imaginations of the mind of man, it is equally evident, that we cannot justly apply to the interpretation of Holy Writ, any preconceived and unauthorized opinions of our own on such points. Nothing can be more unreasonable, and nothing more dangerous, than to speculate for ourselves on matters of doctrine, which we have no faculties to discover, and then to sit in judgment on the words of the Almighty himself with the result of our speculations.

3. The doctrines of which we find an account in the Bible, principally relate to the character and designs of God; and therefore it forms no objection

against the credibility of any of them, that they are *above* our comprehension. On the contrary, that they should be so, might, from the nature of the case, be reasonably expected. God is an infinite Being; the mode of his existence is unsearchable; and the designs of his providence form an endless chain, of which a very few links only are made subject to human observation. How confined, on the other hand, is our understanding! how narrow are the limits of our knowledge! Although our reasoning powers are indeed of high use and importance, when directed to objects within their proper scope, in how great a degree do they fail us, when we attempt to speculate on the "depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Since, therefore, it has pleased the Supreme Being to communicate to us by revelation certain truths respecting his own character, nature, and designs—while, by the most sacred obligations, we are bound to believe *that these things are*, it is in no degree surprising that *the mode in which they are* should be placed beyond the reach of our knowledge and comprehension.

If, moreover, we are told that there are many parts of the Bible which even the learned cannot understand, and some, perhaps, which the wicked have perverted to evil purposes, we may observe, in reply, that in this respect there is an obvious analogy between the *written word*, and the *works* of God; for there is much also in the science of nature itself which the wise are unable to fathom, and which the vicious have misapplied to evil. Nor can it be denied that the difficulties presented to us in Scripture are calculated to serve an excellent purpose. They are useful trials of our faith; useful evidences of our own ignorance. While they teach us that now we see "through a glass darkly," and know but "in part," they may often be the means of exciting us to press forward, with greater diligence, towards that better state of being, in which we shall see "face to face," and "*know even as we are known.*"

4. Lastly, let it be remembered, that the truths recorded in the Holy Scriptures were communicated

to mankind, neither to gratify their curiosity, nor to encourage them in useless speculations on their own metaphysics, or on the nature and designs of God, but to teach them how to live in this world, and to prepare them for the next. Now, as far as relates to these great practical purposes, the Bible, by the simple-hearted and devotional reader, is found to be clear and explicit. While the law of God is so accordant with the conclusions of profound reasoning, that the most enlightened philosophers have yielded to it their willing homage, it is also so plain, that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." Nor ought we ever to forget that the Spirit of the Lord, *by which alone the doctrines taught in the Scriptures are rightly opened to the understanding, and effectually applied to the heart,* is freely bestowed on *all* who diligently seek it.

If, then, we would participate in the benefits of divine truth, nothing is so desirable as to approach the volume of inspiration with a humble and teachable mind, and with earnest prayer that its contents may be blessed to the work of our soul's salvation; nothing so *reasonable* as a conformity with the apostolic injunction. "*As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*" Were this the disposition with which professing Christians never failed to enter into the examination of revealed truth, how soon would the pride of a false philosophy be extinguished among them, and the angry spirit of polemics subside into a calm! How certainly would be verified, in their experience, the promise of the Lord Jesus, that, if any man do the Father's will, *he shall know of the doctrine of Christ whether it be of God!*

ESSAY VI.

ON THE SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNT OF THE SUPREME BEING.

HAVING, in the preceding Essays, taken a brief survey of the evidences from which it may be safely deduced that Christianity is true, and that the Scriptures contain a divinely-authorized record of all its truths, let us now endeavour to make a diligent use of the written word of God, and let us examine the declarations which it contains respecting the fundamental articles of the Christian faith. What, it may be inquired, in the first place, is the account given by the inspired writers, of the nature and attributes of the Supreme Being?

The comprehensive character of that account has already been pleaded as affording one evidence, among many, of the divine origin of the Sacred Volume. Certain it is, that the information respecting the Deity, which we derive from the harmonious works of nature, from the course of providence, and from that sense of his own existence and authority, which (however, in numberless instances, it may be depraved and perverted) he appears to have impressed universally on the minds of men, is in a marvellous manner augmented, and, for all present practical purposes, appears to be *completed*, in the records of revelation.

I. The first principle which it is desirable for us to notice, as unfolded and declared in Scripture, in relation to the present subject, is this: that God is ONE; *that there is no other God but Jehovah;* that, as he is infinitely superior in point of wisdom, authority,

and power, to all other beings, so he is the *only* right object of spiritual adoration. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one* Lord:" Deut. vi. 4. "For though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many and lords many) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him:" 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," was the fundamental principle, not only of the Jewish institution, but of the law of Christ: Matt. iv. 10. "Thus saith the Lord, that created the heavens.....I am the Lord, and there is none else.....They have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.....There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and *there is none else:* Isa. xlv. 18—22.

II. This Supreme Being—this only proper object of worship and spiritual allegiance—is described, in the Holy Scriptures, as *eternal* and *unchangeable.* "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts, I am the *first*, and I am the *last:*" Isa. xliv. 6. "I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *Beginning* and the *Ending*, saith the Lord, which *is*, and which *was*, and which *is to come:* the Almighty:" Rev. i. 8. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world; even from *everlasting* to *everlasting* thou art God:" Psalm xc. 1, 2. "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end:" Psalm cii. 25—27. With "the Father of lights there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning:" James i. 17. This primary attribute of the Supreme Being is not

only declared in these and other passages of Scripture, but is plainly expressed in that distinguishing name of God, which the Jews were accustomed to regard as too sacred to pronounce—*Jehovah;* for this title is derived from a verb signifying *to be*, and denotes the *Eternal*—him who ever has been, is, and ever shall be—him who exists simply, absolutely, and independently. "And God said unto Moses, 'I AM THAT I AM, (in Hebrew, the verb from which the name *Jehovah* is derived,) thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you:'" Exod. iii. 14. Again—"And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, 'I AM JEHOVAH:'" Exod. vi. 2.

III. Jehovah, the Being who has alone existed from all eternity, is ever described in the Scriptures (in accordance with the unvarying dictates of true philosophy) as the First Cause of all other things—the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and whatsoever they contain. The Bible opens with the declaration, that "in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth:" Gen. i. 1. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth..... for he spake, and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast:" Psalm xxxiii. 6—9. "God, that made the world, and all things therein," said the apostle Paul to the Athenians, "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth..... for in him we live and move and have our being." Acts xvii. 24—28. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" Isa. xl. 12. "I form the light and create darkness.... I, the Lord, do all these things:" Isa. xlv. 7. "Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels; praise ye him, all his hosts; praise ye him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord; for

he commanded, and they WERE CREATED:" Psalm cxlviii. 1—5.

When the Lord had condescended to describe to his servant Job the wonders of the creation, Job answered and said, "*I know that thou canst do every thing:*" chap. xlii. 2. "Ah, Lord God," exclaimed the prophet Jeremiah, "behold thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm, and *there is nothing too hard for thee:*" Jer. xxxii. 17. "The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his *eternal power and Godhead:*" Rom. i. 20. Thus is the doctrine of the omnipotence of God derived by the sacred writers from the acknowledged fact that he was the Creator of all things; nor is it possible for us to conceive a greater degree of power than that which was displayed by the Eternal, when he gave to all his creatures their first existence; when he produced an incomprehensibly extensive universe—an universe consisting of organized substances, living creatures, rational, intelligent, beings—*out of nothing.* How often do the Scriptures testify that God alone was the Creator, not only of the earth, but of the heavens also, with all their starry host! When we examine these inspired declarations of unquestionable truth in the light of modern astronomy—when we reflect on God as the sole author of innumerable worlds and systems—when we carry forward our ideas (as analogy affords us sound reasons for doing) to the infinite variety of substance, life, and being, which those worlds, those systems, probably contain, we may indeed with reverence acknowledge that he is, in the strictest sense of the terms, what Scripture declares him to be—ALMIGHTY. Nor can we fail to arrive at the same conclusion, when we examine nature with a microscopic eye, and dwell on the marvellous efficacy displayed by an ever-acting Deity in the production of a muscle or a nerve—in the formation of an insect, a feather, or a leaf! But the works of nature, according to the doctrine of Scripture, as well as the conclusions of reason, afford evidences not only of the power, but also of the

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wisdom of God. "He hath made the earth by his power; he hath established the world by his wisdom; and hath stretched out the heavens by his *discretion:*" Jer. x. 12. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way," cries Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs, "before his works of old..... When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth; when he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep; when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundation of the earth; then *I was by him*, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him:" chap. viii. 22—30.

IV. As the original creation of all things is ever ascribed in the Scriptures to Jehovah, so do we learn from them that by him alone all nature is maintained in its appointed order, and in its wonderful course of perpetual *reproduction*. "He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst..... He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart..... O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all? the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein. These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them, they gather; thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou *renewest the face of the earth*. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works:" Psalm civ. 10—31; *compare* cxlvii.

15—20, &c. Infinite and unsearchable as is our Heavenly Father, every minute part of his creation is the object of his unfailing care. He clothes with radiance and beauty the "lilies of the field"—the grass which "to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven:" Matt. vi. 29, 30. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" said Jesus to his disciples and "*one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father:*" Matt. x. 29.

V. Closely connected with the divine attribute of omnipotence is the unqualified and irresistible *sovereignty* which God exercises over all other beings. Paul has sublimely described the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," as "the blessed and only *potentate*, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see—to whom be honor and power everlasting:" 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and *his kingdom ruleth over all:*" Psalm ciii. 19. "I beheld," says Daniel, when relating his visions, "till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: *thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him!*" vii. 9, 10. "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.....for *the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods:*" Psalm xcv. 1—3. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice:" Psalm xcvii. 1. "Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing:" Isa. xl. 15. "O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven, and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand *is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?*" 2 Chron. xx. 6.

Nor is the *wisdom* of the Almighty to be discovered only in the works of creation; for, although his councils are often incomprehensible to our limited understanding, we are assured in the Scriptures that this divine attribute is the sure regulator of the course of events—of the order of providence. "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for *wisdom* and might are his; and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things; he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him:" Dan. ii. 20—22; *comp.* Job xxxvi. 4—7. In the dispensation of Christianity, more especially, the wisdom of our Almighty Governor is conspicuously displayed. Paul describes him as the "only *wise God our Saviour;*" and speaks of "the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded towards us in all *wisdom* and *prudence:*" Ephesians i. 7, 8. "O the depth of the riches, both of the *wisdom* and *knowledge* of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever:" Rom. xi. 33—36.

VI. The Creator and Ruler of the universe is *a spiritual and invisible Being.* "God is a SPIRIT:" John iv. 24. He is "the King eternal, immortal, *invisible:*" 1 Tim. i. 17. "No man hath seen God at any time:" John i. 18. "Behold," said Job, "I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him:" ch. xxiii. 8, 9. But, spiritual as he is in his nature, and imperceptible to mortal vision, God is *every where.* "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord.

Do not I *fill heaven and earth*, saith the Lord ?" Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. " O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me ; thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising ; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways : for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit ? or whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there : if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there ! If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand leave me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me ; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee ; but the night shineth as the day : the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." Psalm cxxxix. 1—12.

VII. We may observe that, in this sublime effusion of piety and truth, the Psalmist sets before us the omnipresence of the Deity, in immediate connexion with his *omniscience*. It is indeed a doctrine clearly declared, and very frequently adverted to, in Scripture, that God " knoweth all things," 1 John iii. 20 —that " known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world," Acts xv. 18—that " his understanding is infinite," Psalm cxlvii. 5—that " secret things belong unto the Lord our God," Deut. xxix. 29—that there is no creature which " is not manifest in his sight," but that " all things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do," Heb. iv. 13—that " the Lord weigheth the spirits," Prov. xvi. 2, " and knoweth and trieth the hearts and reins," Luke, xi. 15 ; Psalm vii. 9—that the future, as well as the past and the present, is ever open to his view : Isa. xlv. 20, 21. God " discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death : " Job xii. 22. " He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection : "

Job xxviii. 3. "GOD IS LIGHT, and in him is no darkness at all!" 1 John i. 5.

Having thus briefly noticed the unity, the eternity, the omnipotence, the wisdom, the spirituality, the omnipresence, and the omniscience, of God, we may proceed to examine some of the declarations of Holy Writ on another branch of our subject, viz. the *moral* attributes of the Deity.

I. When Jehovah condescended to display his glory to Isaiah in the temple, the seraphims were heard by the prophet to cry one unto another. "*Holy, holy, holy*, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory?" Isa. vi. 1—3. And of some of those celestial beings, who surround the throne of God in heaven, we read, in the Apocalypse, that "they rest not day and night, saying, *Holy, holy, holy*, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come:" Rev. iv. 8. Frequently is the Supreme Being described as "the Holy One of Israel." He is, in this point of view, exalted far above all creatures. "There is none holy as the Lord:" 1 Sam. ii. 2. "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works:" Psalm cxlv. 17. Nor is there any one of the divine attributes which more loudly demands the blessings and praises of the saints. "Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his! and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness:" Psalm xxx. 4. "Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord;.....bring an offering and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!" 1 Chron. xvi. 10, 29.

God is described as holy, partly because he is a sacred Being—the only proper object of divine honor, reverence, and worship—but, more especially, because his nature is absolutely pure, and because in him there dwells the perfection of all *moral excellence*. That this is a true definition of the holiness of God, we learn from the divine precept addressed to ourselves: "Be ye holy, for I am holy," 1 Pet. i. 16; and also from the recorded character of that law, which is given to us for the regulation of our own conduct, and which is ever described as emanating from God himself. "The law is holy," says the apostle, "and

the commandment holy, and just, and good:" Rom. vii. 12. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes: the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever!" Psalm xix. 7—9.

Absolutely pure as is the Supreme Being, and infinitely glorious in the perfection of those moral qualities which his own law prescribes, it is a fact, which admits of no doubt or denial, that in some of the creatures of God moral evil exists and abounds. When we remember the omnipotence of Jehovah—when we call to mind that "from him, and through him, and unto him, are all things"—we may with reverence acknowledge that this fact presents to our narrow and inadequate understandings a mystery which we are utterly incapable of penetrating or explaining. The ways of an infinite God are indeed *unsearchable;* and all that we can safely say on the subject is this—that moral evil is permitted to exist, for some wise, though to us incomprehensible, purpose; and that *all things* will unquestionably be found, in the end, to have been working together for the glory of God, and for the welfare of them that fear him. But, no sooner do we take a single step farther; no sooner do we entertain the idea that God, in the common sense of the expressions, is the *author* of iniquity—that he actually *appoints* it as a means of greater good—that he not only permits, but *approves* it—that he attaches misery to it, not because it deserves to be punished, but because the suffering, as well as the sin, is one link in the chain, which is *always* to end in the good and happiness of the sinner—no sooner do these preposterous doctrines obtain a place in our minds, than we involve ourselves in the most dangerous of all practical errors. Then is our standard of right and wrong destroyed; and while it is impossible for us, with any color of justice, any longer to assert that God is *holy*, we naturally sink down into the conclusion, that virtue and vice are matters of indifference, and in fact, exist only in imagination.

Happily, however, the Scriptures afford the clearest contradiction to all such fatal delusions. In those sacred writings, sin is ever represented as essentially evil; unalterably offensive and abominable in the sight of God; separating those over whom it has dominion from his presence and favour; and exposing them to the righteous indignation of the *Holy One*, not only during the present life, but in the eternal world to come. God is of "purer eyes than to behold evil:" Hab. i. 13. "The Lord is *far* from the wicked:" Prov. xv. 29. "Behold," said Isaiah to a nation of transgressors, "the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have *separated* between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear:" Isa. lix. 1, 2. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink, which justify the wicked for a reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! *Therefore*, as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust, because they have cast away the Law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the HOLY ONE of Israel!" Isa. v. 20—24. "All that do unrighteously are an *abomination* unto the Lord thy God:" Deut. xxv. 16. "The way of the wicked is an *abomination* to the Lord:" Prov. xv. 9. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die:" Ezekiel xviii. 4. "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for *because of these things* cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience:" Eph. v. 5, 6. "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also

of the Gentile:" Rom. ii. 8, 9. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God:" Psalm ix. 17.

Under the patriarchal and legal dispensations, many signal instances were given of temporal calamity as a punishment for sin. In the deluge, from the destructive violence of which eight persons alone, from among all the inhabitants of the earth, were saved; in the utter ruin of Sodom and Gomorrah; in the extirpation of the Canaanitish idolatrous nations by the sword of Israel; in the captivity and sore afflictions of the Jews themselves — God displayed the unequivocal marks of the holiness of his nature—of his absolute abhorrence of all *sin*. But, how much more fearfully will the same divine attribute be manifested in that awful day, when the wrath of an offended Deity shall be finally poured on the ungodly—when the vision of the apostle shall be fulfilled—when all impenitent transgressors "shall be cast into the lake of fire!" Rev. xx. 15.

If there be any thing which can heighten the view thus afforded us of the dreadful offensiveness of sin in the sight of God, it is yet another truth revealed in the Scriptures—that God yielded up his *only-begotten Son*, who dwells in his bosom, and participates in his godhead, and sent even *him* into the world, to suffer in our suffering nature, and to atone for our transgressions, on the cross, that "God might be *just*, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus:" Rom. iii. 26.

II. The word *Just* in this passage appears to include the idea of the inherent *righteousness* of God; and, truly, the method which he has appointed for our justification, through the blood of Christ, clearly displays his righteousness; because, while it is the channel of his unmerited mercy to the sinner, it sets the stamp of the most astonishing of all events on the eternal malignity of sin in his holy sight. The *justice* of God, however, in the more restricted meaning of the words, is manifested in the punishment of iniquity, and in the remuneration of moral excellence — in the fact so often declared in Scripture, that pain and misery are the ultimate and inevitable consequences of vice,

and happiness the sure result of obedience and virtue. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door:" Gen. iv. 7. "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him:" Isa. iii. 10, 11. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting:" Gal. vi. 7, 8. "And these (the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal:" Matt. xxv. 46.

During the period of those preparatory dispensations, under which the realities of an eternal future were far less clearly revealed than they are at present, the faith of the servants of God appears to have been very often tried by the temporal prosperity of the wicked. "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?" cried the mournful Jeremiah; "wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" xii. 1. So also David, when he contrasted his own wretchedness with the riches and power of the Lord's enemies, exclaimed, "When I thought to know this, *it was too painful for me:*" Psalm lxxiii. 16. Yet, when he went "into the sanctuary of God"—when he humbled himself before the righteous Judge of all flesh—he understood the end of the wicked. "When the wicked spring as the grass," said he, on another occasion, "and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever," Psalm xcii. 7—a truth which, in the New Testament, our Saviour has elucidated and confirmed in the most awful and explicit terms: *see* Matt. xxv. 46: John v. 29, &c.

III. In the administration of that retributive system which constitutes the moral government of God—a system which, in the present world, is incipient, and, in the world to come, will be completed—the Deity displays a perfect *equity*. "Without respect of persons, he judgeth according to every man's work:"

1 Peter i. 17. He "accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hand:" Job xxxiv. 19. "Whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free:" Eph. vi. 8. "God is no respecter of persons; but, in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him:" Acts x. 34, 35. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. .....Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel! Is not my way EQUAL? Are not your ways unequal?" Ezekiel xviii. 20. 29. The ignorance and rashness of men are manifested in nothing more clearly than in those unmeasured judgments which they are so prone to form one of another; but God, who is absolutely free from partiality, condemns or acquits, punishes or rewards, his creatures, on a perfectly comprehensive view of all those circumstances by which their guilt is either aggravated or diminished. The more numerous the gifts bestowed, the greater the responsibility incurred: the more abundant the light communicated, the more complete the obedience required. In the history of the poor widow, who threw her last mite into the Lord's treasury, we are furnished with a beautiful exemplification of the apostle's doctrine, that "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not:" 2 Cor. viii. 12. Nor can we doubt that the very same equitable principle is maintained by the Judge of all flesh, in reference to matters of the highest moment. The man who makes a right use of his single talent is, in the most important point of view, on a par with his neighbour, by whom the five talents are improved. Both shall be made rulers over more —both shall enter into "the joy of their Lord." When Jesus was conversing with the disciples on the subject of divine retribution, he elucidated his doctrine in the following memorable words—words which may

teach us at once to tremble for ourselves, and to abstain from any sweeping condemnation of others, to whom the law of God is less fully revealed—"And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with *few* stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required:" Luke xii. 47, 48.

IV. That God is good—abounding in kindness towards his creatures—our bounteous Protector and *Father*—is a truth to which the Scriptures bear an unequivocal testimony. "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works:" Psalm cxlv. 9. "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord:" Psalm xxxiii. 5. "We also are men of like passions with you," cried Paul to the deluded inhabitants of Lystra, "and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein; who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did *good*, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness:" Acts xiv. 15—17. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust:" Matt. v. 45. "God giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.....Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights:" James i. 5, 17.

It is matter of great consolation, that the destitute and afflicted amongst men are, in a peculiar manner, the object of divine tenderness and regard. "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation:" Psalm lxviii. 5. (He) "executeth judgment for the oppressed; (He) giveth food to the hungry; the Lord looseth the prisoners; the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind; the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down.....the Lord preserveth the strangers: he relieveth the fatherless

and widow:" Psalm cxlvi. 7—9. "They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way: they found no city to dwell in: hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble; and he delivered them out of their distresses. And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" Psalm cvii. 4—8.

While, however, the benevolence of God is in many ways exerted towards the whole family of mankind, we are never to forget that it is those who fear the Lord, those who are devoted to his service, those who really belong to his church on earth, who are, in an especial and preeminent manner, the objects of his care and favour. "He that *dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High* shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler:" xci. 1—4. "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" 1 Pet. iii. 13. "But thou, Israel, art my servant, the seed of Abraham my friend. Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee: yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness:" Isa. xli. 8, 10. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom:" Luke xii. 32.

The rewards bestowed upon the righteous form one essential part of that retributive system which I have already noticed as evincing the *justice* of the Deity. Here, however, it ought to be observed, that, although the wicked *deserve* the wrath of the Lord, the most righteous among men are far indeed from having any claim, in themselves, on the happiness which he condescends to bestow upon them. It is his own *good-*

ness which follows them; and of that goodness they are utterly unworthy. After they have done all which he commands them, they are "*unprofitable* servants;" for "who hath first given" unto the Lord, that it should "be *recompensed* unto him again?" Let us observe the distinction—"The *wages* of sin is death; but the *gift* of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord:" Rom. vi. 23.

Such are the descriptions presented to us in Holy Writ of the benevolence and bounty of the Deity. Now, we know that the creatures of God are many of them endued with exquisite sensibility—that, while their frame is adapted to delightful and pleasurable sensations, it is *also* liable to pain. Bodily pain and a certain degree, we may presume, of mental suffering are often endured, even by the beasts of the field and the birds of the air; and, with respect to man, his capacity of suffering pain is large in proportion to his other powers. He is the child, not only of pleasure and joy, but of perplexity, affliction, and tribulation. He is "born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward!" Job v. 7.

This subject, like that of the existence of moral evil, is not without its mysteriousness; but, that, between the pains suffered under particular circumstances by the creatures, and the benevolence of the Creator, there is no *real* inconsistency, a scriptural view of the case will presently convince us. With respect, in the first place, to the inferior animals, the sacred writers occasionally advert to their frail and perishing nature, Ps. xlix. 12; but they are far more frequently occupied in contemplating their strength, their beauty, and their happiness: Job xxxix—xli: Ps. civ. On this branch of the subject, then, it may suffice to observe, that the sensitiveness of these animals is productive of so vast a quantity of pleasure, and of so little pain in the comparison, as to afford an almost unmixed evidence of the benevolence of their Maker; and, unquestionably, the pain which such perishing creatures sometimes endure, although calculated to excite compassion in the feeling mind, is permitted for some wise and gracious, though unknown, purpose.

With respect to the more intelligent creatures of God, all the suffering which they endure may reasonably be regarded, as I have found occasion to remark in a former Essay, as the direct or indirect consequences of sin. That such, more especially, is the fact, as it relates to death, that most powerful afflicter of humanity, we may learn from the apostle Paul; for it is generally allowed that he spoke of natural as well as spiritual death, when he said, "By one man sin entered into the world, and *death by sin;* and so *death passed upon all men,* for that all have sinned:" Rom. v. 12. Now, it is a singular proof of the goodness, as well as the wisdom, of God, that the pains and afflictions of mortals, the direct or indirect consequences of sin, are so overruled for good, that they are often the means of curing the very evil out of which they originate. We learn from the Scriptures, that they are directed by an all-wise and beneficent Deity to the great and good purpose of moral probation and discipline—that they are powerful instruments in his holy hands, for the reformation and restoration of his wandering children. Affliction, in its varied forms, is calculated, above almost every other means, to humble the pride and to soften the hardness of the heart of man. It is affliction by which our faith is tried, and in the end confirmed. It is affliction which calls into exercise our patience, our forbearance, our submission, and our fortitude. "Before I was afflicted," exclaimed David, "I went astray; but now have I kept thy word:" Ps. cxix. 67. "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord *loveth* he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ..... Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live; for they verily, for a few days, chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for *our profit,* that we might be *partakers of his holiness?* Now, no chastening for the

present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless, afterward it *yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness* unto them which are exercised thereby : " Prov. iii. 11 : Heb. xii. 5—11.

The righteous, who are the especial objects of the divine benevolence, are taught of their Heavenly Father, that it is "*through much tribulation*" they " enter the kingdom ;" but theirs is the privilege of receiving, on every trying occasion, strength and consolation proportioned to their day. " But now, saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name : thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee ; for I am the Lord thy God—the Holy One of Israel—thy Saviour : " Isa. xliii. 1—3. The purpose and effect of their sufferings, also, are plainly set before them, for their help and encouragement. " The trial " of " their faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire," is found " unto *praise*, and *honour*, and *glory*, at the appearing of Jesus Christ : " 1 Pet. i. 7. " For which cause we faint not, but, though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day ; for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory : " 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17.

Too many indeed there are, among men, to whom the moral discipline of pain and sorrow, as well as every other administration of divine wisdom, is applied in vain—who, unmoved alike by kindness and by chastisement, continue in their state of sinfulness—hard, stubborn, and impenitent. If the sufferings of such persons are unmitigated—if they find no valid consolation under them—it is not because there is any inadequacy in the goodness of God, but because they are separated from that goodness by their sins. And, if they continue to despise the long-suffering, and to reject the proferred grace, of a perfectly benevolent

Deity, till the time of their visitation, the period of their probation, shall have passed away for ever, and thus expose themselves to the outpouring of his wrath in the world of future retribution, the goodness of God is still unimpeachable—*their blood is upon their own heads.* In the moral attributes of the Deity, there is to be observed the harmony of a perfect adjustment. Every one of those attributes occupies its own province, and fulfils its own end; and, while they operate in different directions, there exists among them an entire congruity. God is *benevolent:* he is also *holy:* and his benevolence is incapable of being ever so exerted as to interrupt or annul his holiness. It can never be applied in such a manner as to confound the distinction between right and wrong, to destroy the standard of virtue, or to subvert that unalterable principle—that the wages of unrepented sin is DEATH.

V. Let it be remembered, however, that the holiness and benevolence of God meet in his attribute of *mercy.* When the Lord condescended to display his glory to Moses, he descended in the cloud, and proclaimed the name of the Lord: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Of all the attributes of the Deity, indeed, there is none more largely unfolded in Scripture than his *mercy*—his gracious and unfailing disposition to pardon the iniquities of his children, on their forsaking their sins, on their turning back again to the God of their salvation, on their offering to him the acceptable sacrifice of a contrite heart. "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity," said David, "O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption:" Ps. cxxx. 4. 7. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not:" Lam. iii. 22. "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways and live?" Ezek. xviii. 23.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon:" Is. lv. 7.

Nothing can be conceived more tender and exquisite than the compassions of Jehovah. He follows his unworthy children in all their wanderings; he visits and revisits them with his Holy Spirit; he suffers their rebellion *long;* he pleads with them as a father; he says, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together:" Hosea xi. 8. The prodigal son, humbled under the miserable consequences of his dissolute life, returns with a penitent heart to his paternal home. His father beholds him while yet he is a great way off—runs towards him—falls on his neck and kisses him—puts on him his best robe—kills the fatted calf for his entertainment—and fondly rejoices over him, because he "was dead, and is alive again, was lost, and is found:" Luke xv.

But it is the scheme of redemption, as revealed to mankind in the Gospel of Jesus Christ—in that wonderful truth, that the Father gave the Son to be the Sacrifice for sin, and the Saviour of sinners—that the mercy of God towards his corrupted and degraded children is displayed in all its brightness, and in all its consistency with the holiness of his nature. "God commendeth his *love* toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:" Rom. v. 8. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great *love* wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ:" Eph. ii. 4, 5. "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he *loved* us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins:" 1 John iv. 10. When we contemplate this amazing scene, and are humbled in the view of it; when we hear the Spirit say, Come, and the bride say, Come, and, in compliance with the invitation, draw near to the "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness;" when we wash our robes, and make

them white in the *blood of the Lamb*, and "take the water of life freely;"—then are we prepared to confess of a truth the perfect holiness of Jehovah—then also can we enter into the strength and spirit of the apostle's declaration, that "GOD IS LOVE:" 1 John iv. 16.

VI. Lastly, let it be observed, that God is *true* and *faithful*. "The word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done in *truth*:" Ps. xxxiii. 4. "The works of his hands are *verity* and judgment—all his commandments are sure; they stand fast for ever and ever; and are done in truth and uprightness:" Ps. cxi. 7, 8. The truth, no less than the mercy of God, called forth the praises of his inspired servants. "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness, and for *thy truth*; for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name:" Ps. cxxxviii. 2. "The Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting, and *his truth* endureth to all generations:" Ps. c. v. "Also the strength of Israel will not lie:" 1 Sam. xv. 29. "If we believe not, yet he abideth *faithful; he cannot deny himself:*" 2 Tim. ii. 13. The divine quality so plainly declared in these and numerous other passages of Holy Writ is of unutterable importance, because it affords a pledge of that eternal stability in the operation of all his other moral attributes, upon which his dependent creatures may place a perfect reliance. The word of the Lord is sure. His law is unalterable. His judgments are certain. His promises cannot fail. Let the wicked tremble before him, in the certain assurance that his threats will be executed—that the day of his wrath will come in its season. Let the righteous rejoice, because they have a faithful Creator, to whom, with absolute security, they may commit the keeping of their souls, 1 Pet. iv. 19; because "he which hath begun a good work in them, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. i. 6; because they have an hope "which entereth into that within the veil," as "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast," Heb. vi. 19; because "he is faithful that promised," Heb. x. 23; because God, who "sent redemption unto

his people, *hath commanded his covenant for ever:*" Ps. cxi. 9.

Such is a feeble sketch of the account presented to us in the Scriptures, of the nature and character of God. In the recollection of the principal features of our subject, we are once more to observe, that there is no other God but *Jehovah;* that this one God is from eternity to eternity; that he gave existence to all other beings, and is alone the Creator of the heavens and the earth; that, in the work of creation, he displayed an absolute omnipotence and perfect wisdom; that he manifests the same attributes in the perpetual maintenance of the laws of nature; that he is the absolute sovereign of the universe, and orders the whole course of events by his providence; that he is invisible, yet omnipresent, filling his own works; that he is omniscient, penetrating the inmost recesses of the hearts of his children; that he is absolutely holy, the Fountain of purity, abhorring sin, rejecting and condemning all iniquity; that he is just, conducting his moral government on a system of righteous retribution, in which it is well with the good, and ill with the wicked; that, in the application of this retributive system, he maintains a perfect equity: that he is good, abounding in benevolence towards all his sensitive creatures, protecting the injured and oppressed, and, in an especial manner, extending his fostering care to those who fear and serve him; that, although he leaves the impenitent sinner to suffer, yet he comforts and supports every contrite mourner, and overrules the afflictions of the righteous to their eternal advantage; that he is willing to forgive, and rich in *mercy* towards the whole degraded family of mankind; that, in the scheme of man's redemption, above all, it is made abundantly manifest, that GOD IS LOVE. Finally, that in his truth and faithfulness, we have an unfailing warrant that his judgments will be executed, his mercies perfected, and all his promises found to be yea and amen for ever.

In retiring from the consideration of this awful subject, must we not exclaim with the Psalmist, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy

fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him!" Must we not be humbled in the dust under a sense of the incomprehensible condescension of God, who is pleased to dwell in us, and to invite us as a father, to dwell in Him? And ought we not to press with holy diligence after that better state of being, in which we shall know God, "even as we are known" —in which we shall find eternity not too long for contemplating the attributes, performing the will, and declaring the praises, of JEHOVAH?

ESSAY VII.

ON THE UNION AND DISTINCTION IN THE DIVINE NATURE.

THE contents of the preceding Essay afford abundant evidence that the doctrine of the unity of God is not only explicitly declared by the inspired writers, but lies at the very foundation of their system of religion, and pervades it in every part. Whether they were led to write of his power, his omniscience, and his wisdom, or to expatiate on his moral attributes, it never failed to be on the allowed and declared principle, that there is no other God but Jehovah, the Creator and Governor of all things, the only proper object of spiritual allegiance and adoration. While, however, this primary truth must ever be held sacred on the authority of the Holy Scriptures, it is on the same authority that we admit another doctrine,—namely, that, in his revealed operations, and more especially in the appointment and application of the scheme of man's redemption, God has manifested himself to us as the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY SPIRIT.

In order to the elucidation of this subject—a subject which ought never to be approached without a feeling of profound humility and reverence—we may now advert to some of those scriptural declarations, from which we learn that the Father is God; that the Son is God; and that the Holy Spirit is God.

1. That the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who sent his only-begotten Son into the world, is God, is

universally admitted by Christians ; and, on the present occasion, nothing can be needful but to adduce two or three of those numerous texts of Scripture, in which he is at once distinguished as the *Father*, and described as the *Deity*. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be saved :" John iii. 17. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord :" 1 Cor. i. 9. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ :" 1 Pet. i. 3. Such and similar are the terms in which the sacred writers invariably express themselves respecting the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever, indeed, Jesus is described as the *Son of God*, there the Deity of the Father, as he is distinguished from the Son, is recognized and declared.

2. The divine nature and character of Jesus Christ, the *Word or Son* of God, will form the principal subject of a subsequent Essay. In the mean time, therefore, we may confine ourselves, in reference to this interesting topic, to the citation of that comprehensive and emphatic declaration, in which, at the very commencement of his Gospel, the apostle John has adverted to the pre-existence of the Messiah, and has attributed to him, at once, both the name and the works of Deity. "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him : and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life ; and the life was the light of men :*" John i. 1—4.

3. With respect to the Holy Spirit, we must, in the first place, direct our attention to those passages of Scripture, in which he is described, not merely in his influence and operation, but in his personal character. Such was the point of view in which the Holy Spirit was held up to the attention of the earliest Christians by the Lord Jesus. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, HE[7] shall teach you all things, and bring

[7] ἐκεῖνος.

all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you:" John xiv. 26. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, HE[7] shall testify of me:" xv. 26. "It is expedient for you, that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send HIM[8] unto you. And when HE[9] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:" John xvi. 7. 8. On another occasion, our Saviour made mention of the Holy Ghost, as One against whom the sin of blasphemy could never be committed with impunity. "All manner of sin and blasphemy," said he, "shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come:" Matt. xii. 31, 32.

The very pointed allusions thus made by our Saviour to the personality of the Holy Spirit are in exact accordance with the mode of expression which was often adopted, in relation to the same subject, by his inspired disciples. From various passages in the Book of Acts, and the Epistles, we can scarcely do otherwise than deduce the inference, that these servants of the Lord regarded the Holy Spirit as one possessing a personal authority, exercising personal powers, and requiring a personal allegiance. When Ananias and Sapphira kept back part of the price of their land, it was the Holy Spirit to whom they *lied*, and whom they conspired to *tempt*: Acts v. 3, 9. When the church at Antioch was engaged in ministering to the Lord with fasting, it was the Holy Spirit who said unto them, "Separate ME Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them;" and it was he by whom these evangelists were *sent forth*, when they departed unto Seleucia: Acts xiii. 2, 4. It was the Holy

[7] ἐκεῖνος [8] αὐτὸν. [9] ἐκεῖνος.

Spirit who directed the course of the apostle Paul's journeys; who *forbade* him to preach the word in Asia; who *suffered* him not to go into Bithynia: Acts xvi. 6. 7. It was the Holy Spirit, as well as the apostles and their brethren, to whom it "*seemed good*" to refrain from imposing on the Gentiles the burden of the Jewish ritual: Acts xv. 28. It was he who constituted the overseers of the churches: Acts xx. 28. It was he who inspired the apostles; who spake and testified by the prophets: Mark xiii. 11: Acts xxviii. 25: Heb. iii. 7; ix. 8; x. 15. "*Grieve* not the Holy Spirit of God," said Paul to the Ephesians, "whereby (or by whom) ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," Ephes. iv. 30; and to the Corinthians, "Know ye not that your body is the *temple* of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?" 1 Cor. vi. 19. Lastly, in describing the diversified, yet harmonious, operation of spiritual gifts, the same apostle says, "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit, &c. &c. . . . . But all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, *dividing to every man severally as he will:*" 1 Cor. xii. 8—11.

Now, if the inquiry be addressed to us, Who is HE, of whom Christ and his apostles thus bear witness; who teaches and consoles the disciples of Jesus; who reproves the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; whom it is unpardonable to blaspheme, wicked and dangerous to tempt and to grieve; who finds his temple in the hearts of the righteous; who inspires the apostle; speaks by the prophet; appoints the overseer; calls forth, anoints, and directs the evangelist; who distributes to his people, according to his own will, those manifold gifts and graces, by which the church is edified, and the cause of truth promoted?—the fundamental principles of our religion, and the whole analogy of Scripture, will assuredly admit but of one answer—HE IS GOD.

God is a spirit. Invisible, and spiritual, in his nature, he fills his own works: he exercises over them an unseen and powerful influence: he dwells and operates in the hearts of Men. Nor can we deny the

truth of the converse of such a proposition—namely, that the Spirit who fills the works of deity, who exercises over them an unseen, yet powerful influence, who dwells and operates in the hearts of men, is *God*. "NOW THE LORD IS THAT SPIRIT," said the apostle Paul; "and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the SPIRIT OF THE LORD:" 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.

II. Such is the scriptural evidence of which we are in possession, that the Father is God, that the Son is God, that the Holy Spirit is God. Having considered this evidence, we may now proceed to take a view of some additional passages in the New Testament, in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, whose deity is thus distinctively and separately indicated, are presented to our attention as the united sources of the Christian's help and consolation, the united objects of the Christian's belief and obedience. This description is indeed applicable to the passages already cited from the Gospel of John, in relation to the personality of the Holy Ghost: *vide* xiv, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7, 8. To these passages, however, others of a similar import must now be added.

"Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come," said the Son of God to his immediate followers, "he *will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you:*" John xvi. 13, 14. If, then, I am asked, Who is to guide the people of God into all truth? I answer, on the authority of this luminous declaration, The *Spirit of Truth*. If I am asked again, Whose wisdom and grace does the Spirit of Truth administer? it is on the same authority that I reply, The wisdom and grace of the *Son of God*. And if, lastly, the inquiry be addressed to me, On what principle can we say that it is the wisdom and

grace of *the Son* which the Spirit administers? this inquiry also is fully met by the information contained in our text—namely, that all wisdom and grace are from the Father, and that whatsoever the Father hath *is the Son's*. From whom, then, does the Christian derive the strength of his spiritual life, and the hope of his soul's salvation? From the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And to whom does he owe the tribute of gratitude and praise, and the return of a faithful and unhesitating obedience? To the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Such was the doctrine inculcated by the apostle Paul, on more than one occasion. "There is one body, and ONE SPIRIT," said he to the Ephesians, "even as ye are called in one hope of your calling—ONE LORD, one faith, one baptism—ONE GOD AND FATHER of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all;" Eph. iv. 4, 6. To the Corinthians he addressed himself in very similar terms: "Now, there are diversities of gifts, but the same SPIRIT; and there are differences of administrations, but the same LORD; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same GOD which worketh all in all:" 1 Cor. xii. 4—6. Again, "The grace of the LORD Jesus Christ, and the love of GOD, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST, be with you all. Amen:" 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Here we may observe, that the name of *God* is appropriated to the Father, as is the title *Lord* to the Son; but the various passages previously cited afford abundant proof that the Spirit and the Son are no more excluded from the Godhead of the Father than the Father is excluded from the Lordship of the Son, or from the administrative authority of the Spirit; and from these explicit declarations it is evident that, in the covenant of light and life which God condescends to make with his fallen creatures, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, display a perfect harmony and unity of operation.

Of this harmony and unity of operation, in instituting and conducting the scheme of the Gospel, a very striking indication is afforded us in the narratives given, by the evangelists Matthew and Luke, of one

of the most interesting circumstances which distinguished the life of Jesus. When Jesus, in order to "fulfil all righteousness," submitted himself to the baptism of John, we read that "the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him; and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased:" Luke iii. 21, 22; *comp.* Matt. iii. 15—17.

And now it only remains for us to advert to that memorable injunction respecting evangelizing and baptising the nations, which appears to have formed the conclusion of our Lord's last conversation with his disciples on earth: "Go ye therefore and teach (or make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them in (or unto) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world:" Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. On this passage it is necessary to observe that, to baptize *in* the name of a person, is to baptize by the authority of that person; but that, to baptize *unto* the name of a person, (and the preposition here used signifies not *in*, but *unto*) is to baptize unto the faith and service of which such person is the object. Now, in whatever manner we may here interpret the participle *baptizing*—whether we understand it as denoting merely the sign of conversion, or the act of converting itself—there is one point of the doctrine contained in this passage which does not appear liable to any reasonable doubt or dispute; namely, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, being the common sources of the Christian's hope and salvation, are also the common objects of his faith and spiritual allegiance. The converts who were about to be made, through the ministry of the apostles, among all nations, were to be turned away from dumb idols unto the living God. No longer were they to place their dependance on devils, or on the mere creatures of human imagination: they were henceforth to serve, honour, worship, and obey, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Clear, however, as this general doctrine appears to be, the consideration of this branch of our subject cannot be safely quitted, without the addition of some further observations. When we assert, on the authority of Scripture, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are the common objects of the Christian's allegiance—when we recognize the principle promulgated by our Saviour himself, that all men are called upon to "honour the Son, even as they honour the Father," John v. 23 ; and when, from other inspired declarations, we conclude that this principle is to be yet farther extended, and that all men are called upon also to honour the Holy Spirit, even as they honour the Father and the Son—we are always to remember that the equality of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is an equality in point of *nature ;* for, in their nature, they are God, and God is one. In order to obtain a just and comprehensive view of the whole subject, (as far as it is revealed to us) it is necessary *also* to advert to the *order* of that relation in which they are ever represented as standing one towards another. The Father is the *first :* the Son is the *second :* the Holy Spirit is the *third.* The Son is subordinate to the Father, because he is of the Father —the only-begotten Son of God. The Holy Spirit is subordinate to the Father and the Son, because he is the Father's and the Son's : *see* Matt. iii. 16 : Rom. viii. 9. The Father *sends* the Son. The Father and the Son *send* the Holy Spirit : John xv. 26.

Again—while we gratefully confess that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are the common sources of our hope and salvation, we are never to forget the distinct offices which they are respectively described as bearing, in the glorious economy of the divine dispensations. With the *Father* rests the unsearchable design—the hidden and eternal purpose—out of which arises the whole course of circumstances and events, and more especially the scheme of Christianity, and the salvation of man : *see* John iii. 16 : Eph. i. 1—10, &c. *From* him are all things, and of all things his glory is the ultimate result. His *will* is *law.* His *love* is the fountain of grace and immortality. The *Son* is the

Way, by whom are all things, and "we *by* him." He is the image of the invisible God, in whom the Father is made manifest. He propitiates, he advocates, he reigns over the heritage of God; he conducts the whole system appointed for our recovery and salvation. The *Holy Spirit* is the operative Power, through whom the Father and the Son carry on their work of mercy, and exercise their dominion over the souls of men. It is he who enlightens, converts, renews, consoles, and purifies, the heirs of salvation. The *Father* is, in the deepest and most comprehensive sense of the expressions, the Creator—the *Son*, the Redeemer—the *Holy Spirit*, the Sanctifier. The Father originates, the Son mediates, the Holy Spirit consummates.

In order to complete our views of the scriptural evidences which bear upon the present subject, I have now to observe, that, although this threefold distinction in the divine nature is the most clearly revealed to us in the New Testament, yet there are also various passages in the sacred writings of the ancient Hebrews, which appear to indicate a plurality *in the one God.* It is a circumstance which cannot, I would submit, be satisfactorily explained on any merely grammatical principle, that Jehovah is sometimes described, in the Old Testament, as the "*living ones*,"[1] and the "*holy ones*:"[2] see Jer. xxiii. 36: Prov. ix. 10; xxx. 3: *comp.* Ecc. xii. 1, &c. *Hebrew text.*

The Father is the Creator of the universe. He made all things *by his Son:* nor are we to forget, that when the "earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, *the Spirit of God* moved upon the face of the waters:" Gen. i. 2. We may therefore conclude, that Jehovah was neither honouring himself, like the potentates of the earth, with the assumption of an unmeaning plurality, (as the Jews pretend) nor making the angels his counsellors, (as some Christian commentators have irreverently imagined) but speaking in his true and appropriate character, when he was pleased to express himself as follows, "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR

[1] חיים. [2] קדשים

likeness:" Gen. i. 26. Again, "Behold, the man is become as one of US, to know good and evil:" iii. 22.

When Isaiah beheld the vision of Jehovah in the temple, the glory of God was displayed to his mental perception; yet, that it was the *Son of God* whose glory appeared to him, and through whom therefore the Father was manifested, is indirectly asserted by an inspired evangelist: John xii. 41. And that it was the Holy Ghost, from whom the Prophet then received his commission, we may learn from the express declaration of the apostle Paul: Acts xxviii. 25. Can we not therefore discern, in the *theology* of Scripture, a substantial reason why the Seraphim, who then surrounded their Lord, cried, saying, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, is Jehovah of hosts!" and why Jehovah himself was afterwards heard to say, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for US?" Isaiah vi. 3, 8.

In conclusion, I would invite the reader's attention to the very remarkable and interesting fact, that, throughout the greater part of the Old Testament, (that is to say, in upwards of two thousand instances) God is described by a plural substantive, ELOHIM. This plural substantive is very usually connected with the name *Jehovah;* and its other adjuncts also, whether they are verbs, adjectives, or pronouns, are almost universally placed in the singular number. Thus, in the first verse of the Book of Genesis, the Hebrew terms rendered, "God created," might be literally represented, in the Latin tongue, by *Dii creavit.*[3] This anomalous mode of expression, which is to be observed (as I understand) in none of the Eastern languages, except the Hebrew, and which is, in fact, peculiar (as far as its original use is concerned) to the oracles of God, consigned by his own providence to that ancient language, has been the subject of many and large discussions.

Some writers have regarded it as indirectly derived from the heathen, and as maintained by the Hebrews, for the purpose of showing, that in Jehovah alone centred the whole of that power and authority which

[3] ברא אלהים.

other nations were accustomed to attribute to their numerous and false deities. When, however, we consider that the oneness of their God was the most distinguishing characteristic of the religion of the Hebrews, and that they were forbidden every the slightest approach, either in word or deed, to the corrupt manners and customs of idolaters, we can hardly conceive it possible that Moses and the prophets should have given their countenance to so needless and even dangerous a relic of heathenism. Nor can we feel much more satisfaction in the decision of certain critics, that this use of the term Elohim is to be explained by a rule of Hebrew grammar; namely, that *nouns expressive of magnitude and power, and relating to an individual,* may be *sometimes recited in the plural number;* for the instances adduced in elucidation of the rule thus stated are few in number, dissimilar in various respects from the example now in question, and, for the most part, capable of being otherwise explained. [4] On the

[4] The rule above alluded to appears rather to have been invented by grammarians for the purpose of explaining the use of the plural name *Elohim,* than to have been formed on the basis of any solid evidence that so anomalous a mode of speech really appertains to the genius of the Hebrew language. The instances adduced of the application of plural nouns to individuals, in *order to express magnitude or authority,* are far from sufficient, according to my apprehension of the subject, to justify the establishment of such a rule. Besides, the word *Elohim,* the plural form of which may be so properly explained on a totally different principle, the only examples given of the supposed rule, which have even the appearance of being in point, are תנים a dragon, בהמות Behemoth, בעלי master, אדני, אדנים, Lord.

On these examples I may venture to offer a few remarks. 1. תנים as used by Ezekiel (xxxii. 2,) to describe a *crocodile* or *water serpent,* is evidently to be distinguished from the *plural* substantive תנים, which, as employed by Isaiah (xxxiv. 13,) and Jeremiah, (ix. 11,) &c. denotes a species of animals dwelling in desert and desolate places—probably the *canes feri,* or *jackals.* The תנים of Ezekiel is in all probability a noun in the *singular* number, synonymous with תנין *a dragon.* 23 of Kennicott's

whole, therefore, I cannot avoid entertaining the opinion, that this striking, yet very prevalent, anomaly appertained to the *religion* of the Hebrews, and was intended to convey some information respecting the Deity whom

MSS. in Ezekiel xxxii. 2. read תנין : *vide Pocock* on Micah i. 8.

2. בהמות Behemoth in Job xl. 15, supposed by some persons to be a plural substantive, denoting a single large animal, may signify, as in various other passages of Scripture, the plural *Beasts*. "Behold now Behemoth (the beasts) which I have made with thee—He eateth grass as an ox, &c." Here the work of creation, as displayed in the formation of the beasts of the earth, is at first adverted to in general terms; and then follows a specification of some particular animal (probably the Elephant) whose name has either been lost from the text, (as Michaelis supposes, *Sup. ad. lex. Heb. in voc.*) or was not mentioned at all by the poet. If we do not adopt this obviously probable explanation of the word בהמות, we must construe it with the *masculine* singular verb יאכל, in which case we can no longer imagine it to be a *feminine* plural noun, and must adopt the opinion of Bochart, the Scriptural naturalist, who considers *Behemoth* to be a foreign (probably an *Egyptian*) name—a name which he explains as denoting the Hippopotamus: *Hieroz.* p. ii. lib. V. cap. 14.

3. The nouns בעל (Baal) *master*, and אדון (Adon) *Lord*, when in *statu constructo*, sometimes, but not universally, assume a final י. This however, is a circumstance by no means peculiar to these substantives, but is often to be observed, as in the examples עבדיך thy servant, דבריך thy word, &c. &c. Even the prepositions עד, אל, על, are sometimes written with a final י; which, in the whole of the cases now cited, may fairly be regarded, not as marking the plural number, but as added for the sake of a smooth and easy sound. "בעליו" says Aben Ezra, upon Genesis i. 1; and so the words "עדיו, אליו, עליו:" *vide Gussetti Comm.* p. 57. The Hebrew Scriptures afford no example of the plural בעלים employed to denote an individual. The plural אדנים is supposed to relate to a single person, in 1 Kings xxii. 17, and in the parallel passage, 2 Chron. xviii. 16; also in Isa. xix. 4; but in each of these passages the reader will find, on a reference to them, that אדנים *may be rendered as*

they worshipped. Of the nature of that information (if this is the true state of the case) it is by no means difficult to form a judgment; for, of all those phrases in which the plural Elohim is connected with the name

plural, without violence to the sense of the text. So the Targum in 1 Kings xxii. 17, the Vulgate in 2 Chron. xviii. 16, and the Sept. Syr. and Vulg. in Isa. xix. 4. In Malachi i. 6, the plural, אדנים, like the plural אלהים, unquestionably represents an individual; but that individual is JEHOVAH.

With respect to other nouns indicative of authority, such as נשיא princeps, שליש dux, מלך rex, &c. &c., it is on all hands allowed, that when they relate to an individual, they are never recited in the plural number. Even, therefore, if it be allowed that the substantive אדון, *Lord*, in a very few instances presents such an anomaly, (which appears to me very doubtful, though I by no means intend to assert the contrary) I would suggest that a single example, and one so very limited, cannot justify the formation of the grammatical rule now under discussion; or afford any reasonable philological explanation of that extraordinary use of a plural name to denote the One God, which may be describe as one of the *most prevalent and most distinguishing characteristics of the Hebrew Scriptures.*

As an objection to the commonly received theological explanation of the plural *Elohim*, when used to represent Jehovah, it is sometimes remarked that this term is occasionally employed to describe an individual false God; and further, that there are passages in the Old Testament, in which it especially represents the Son. Now, since Elohim, according to the general and almost universal usage of the term, denotes the true God, we may conclude that this alone is its proper meaning; and that in the few passages of Scripture in which this name is given to any false God, it is used (to adopt a grammatical phrase) *improprie.* I conceive that Chemosh is styled the Elohim of the Moabites, Milcom the Elohim of the Ammonites, and Baal Zobeb the Elohim of the Eronites, not because any one of these idols was, in any proper sense of the term, *Elohim;* but because they were severally to their respective followers that which *Elohim* was to the Hebrews—i. e. the god whom they worshipped: *see* 1 Kings xi. 33. That there are passages in the Hebrew Scriptures, in which this plural name has an especial relation to the Son of God, cannot be

Jehovah, or with other adjuncts in the singular number, the obvious import—I might almost say the literal translation—is *plurality in unity*. Now, if we are led to inquire what is that plurality which subsists in the *one indivisible Jehovah?* the New Testament answers in explicit terms, "THE FATHER, and THE SON, and the HOLY GHOST."

On reverting to the heads of the present Essay, the reader will recollect, First, that there are a variety of passages in the New Testament, from which we learn that the Father is God, that the Son is God, and that the Holy Ghost is God—Secondly, that in other parts of the Gospels and Epistles, the doctrine is plainly unfolded, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, whose deity is thus separately declared, are the united sources of our regeneration, redemption, sanctification, and salvation; the common and equal objects of our belief and devotion; yet so that they are first, second, and third, in order, and are revealed to us as severally fulfilling distinct offices in the divine economy; the Father as originating, the Son as mediating, the Holy Spirit as completing. Thirdly, that, in the Hebrew Scriptures, also, there is much which accords with this doctrine, and which appears to indicate, in no ambiguous manner, a plurality in the divine essence—in the ONLY TRUE GOD.

And now I would finish this Essay, as I began it, with a plain declaration of my full reliance on that essential and unalterable principle of Christianity, that God is ONE—that there is no other God but JEHOVAH. That principle is, indeed, weakened and contradicted by those religionists, (if such are still to be found,) who hold that the Son and the Holy Spirit are not God—but *gods;* objects of faith, worship, and spiritual allegiance; and yet created beings, of a na-

reasonably disputed: *see* Isa. xxxv. 4, xl. 3: Psalm xlv. 6. But this fact may surely be explained without any subversion of the doctrine that *Elohim* denotes a plurality in the divine essence; for in that divine essence there is also a perfect *unity;* and wherever the Son of God is manifested, there is manifested the *Elohim.* "He that hath seen me," said Jesus, "hath seen the Father."

ture inferior to that of the Father. Such a sentiment is utterly at variance with the scope and tenor of the Bible, and is, in no slight degree, assimilated to the corrupt and degraded heathenism of ancient Greece and Rome. But, in the doctrine, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are God—the true God—Jehovah—the Supreme Being—the Maker and Governor of the universe; or, in other words, that God has been pleased to manifest himself to us, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—there is nothing which really contravenes his unity: nothing which can, in any degree, involve our partaking in the errors and sins of an idolatrous system.

God is an infinite and unsearchable Being. The *mode* of that union, and of that distinction, which, as Christians, we believe to subsist in HIM, is placed far beyond the utmost reach of our limited comprehension: it is concealed alike from the uneducated peasant and from the profound and enlightened philosopher; and it can never be a fit subject, either for the speculation, or for the definition, of *men*. But the doctrine, that there *is* such a union, and that there *is* such a distinction, will not cease to be regarded as of inexpressible value, by those persons who bow with reverence before the divine authority of the sacred records, and who are, from their own experience aware of its *practical* influence and operation. May the writer and the readers of this Essay never become so infatuated as to contradict the *absolute unity* of the unchangeable Jehovah! and may they also, through the grace of God, be ever preserved from denying the *eternal divinity* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

ESSAY VIII.

ON THE SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNT OF THE SPIRITUAL ADVERSARY.

WHEN we take a calm view of the moral degradation which marks the history and character of man; when we endeavour to trace the multiform appearances of SIN, and observe the force with which it rages and spreads in the world: and when we call to mind the consequence which it is calculated to produce, in the absolute ruin of our immortal part—we can scarcely continue insensible of a strong impression, that there exists some powerful, active, personal, agent, who rules over and conducts the kingdom of darkness; and who, in a proper sense of the expressions, is the AUTHOR OF EVIL.

If the inquiry be suggested, why the weight of this impression is not more fully acknowledged, and why some persons, who exult in the exercise of their reasoning powers, are found rashly rejecting the doctrine of a Satanic influence, as absurd and imaginary—a satisfactory answer to such an inquiry is afforded us in the lamentable fact, that this doctrine has been made the vehicle of so many foolish imaginations, and of so many idle tales—tales impressed on our minds and memories even from early youth—that the views of men on the subject have been very generally corrupted. Thus, that effort of the human mind, which is employed to sweep away the absurd and ridiculous phantom, is too often found to extend itself, until, in reference to the present awful subject, we have also

discarded the sober dictates of good sense, probability, and truth.

In order, then, to form a just view of the doctrine in question— a view which shall be free at once from credulity and from scepticism—let us lay aside both our imaginations and our prejudices, and let us, with a humble spirit, examine the testimony given on the subject, in the records of divine revelation. For, as the Scriptures plainly declare that the Supreme Being is absolutely opposed to all moral evil—that his light condemns it, that his power subdues it, and that his judgments will, in the end, assuredly overtake it—so they also teach us, in a very explicit manner, that there exist powerful spirits, and one eminent above the rest, in whom all manner of moral evil dwells, and to whose agency it may be directly traced.

We read that the beings now alluded to were once numbered among the angels of God; and we may therefore conclude, without a question, that they were created holy. In what manner they became sinful, the Scriptures do not reveal, and it is impossible for us to conceive; but certain it is, that these children of light *became* the "Rulers of the darkness of this world"—that they lost the character of saints, and with it the joys and privileges of heaven. The apostle Jude describes them as the angels which "*kept not their first estate*, but left their own habitation," ver. 6; and, respecting Satan, their governor and leader, (Eph. ii. 2.) our Saviour himself expressly asserts that he "*abode not in the truth:*" John viii. 44. Again, on another occasion, when the disciples were astonished to find that "even the devils were made subject to them," Jesus explained the fact by a reference, as appears most probable, to the original fall of his mighty adversary. "I beheld Satan," said he, "as lightning fall from heaven:" Luke x. 18.

The next point in the history of Satan, revealed to us in the Bible, is one of mournful interest, because it has been fraught with the most destructive consequences *to ourselves:* I mean the seduction of our first parents into the commission of that sin of infidelity and disobedience, which resulted in the moral ruin

of mankind. That the serpent who tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge was the devil—or that the devil spake and acted in the serpent—is generally allowed and understood by Christians; and is amply evinced to be true, partly by the whole analogy of the character of Satan, as the deceiver and destroyer of men, and partly by the obvious bearing of particular passages in the New Testament. It was plainly in allusion to his appearance in the temptation of Eve, that the devil is described in the Revelation of John, as "*that old serpent*.....which deceiveth the whole world," Rev. xii. 9; and the same doctrine may be elicited from the declaration of Jesus, that Satan was "a murderer *from the beginning:*" John viii. 44. Cain, whose crime was one of the first conspicuous consequences of the fall of his parents, is described as being "*of that wicked one,*" 1 John iii. 12; and that he whom the early Christians were taught to consider as their spiritual tempter, was the very same being who beguiled Eve, appears to be with sufficient plainness indicated by the apostle Paul: "But I fear," said he to his Corinthian converts, "lest, by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, *so* your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ:" 2 Cor. xi. 3.

In the subsequent parts of the Old Testament, there are but few allusions to the character of Satan; yet was he recognized, on more than one occasion, by its inspired writers, as a personal agent employed in resisting good and in actively promoting evil. It was, in all probability, no subordinate adversary, but the "*Prince* of the power of the air," who, under the name of Satan, is described, in the book of Job, as "going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it," i. 7; and as laying the hand of sore affliction upon that righteous man, in order that he might be induced to rebel against God and die. It was Satan, who is declared to have *provoked* David, at a moment of self-exaltation, into the sin of numbering the people: 1 Chron. xxi. 1. It was Satan, who, in the book of the prophecies of Zechariah, is described as standing at the right hand of the angel,

to resist Joshua, the faithful servant and high-priest of the Lord: Zech. iii. 1, 2; *comp.* Psalm cix. 6.

On that memorable occasion, when Jehovah pronounced the sentence of condemnation on Eve, her husband, and the serpent, it was predicted that this wily enemy of God and man should bruise the heel of the seed of the woman; that is, of him who was made of a woman"—the Messiah of Israel; and, on a reference to the New Testament, we perceive at once in what manner the events, thus obscurely indicated, were accomplished. Satan was the spiritual and powerful agent who tempted, buffeted and persecuted, even unto death, the holy and suffering Jesus. Of all the circumstances recorded in the Gospels, there is no one more extraordinary, and no one at the same time more positively described as having actually taken place, than the temptation of Jesus by the devil: *see* Matt. iv. 1—11: Mark i. 12, 13. It appears to have been necessary to the completion of that comprehensive scheme which was appointed for man's redemption, that the author and minister of our faith should be subjected, in various ways, to the baptism of suffering, and, though incapable of sin, should be "tempted like as we are." Accordingly, we find, that, previously to the commencement of his ministry, he was led of the Spirit into the wilderness, where, during forty days of fasting, he was exposed to the insidious aggressions of his enemy; and, however mysterious this part of the history of Jesus may be in some points of view, one thing is indisputable—that the whole scene displays, in clear colors, the restlessness, artfulness, perseverance, and malignity, of Satan.

After that scene had been brought to its close, we read that Satan "departed from Jesus,"—but only "*for a season:*" Luke iv. 13. All the circumstances of the case are such as lead us to the conclusion, that his attacks upon the Messiah were renewed from time to time; and that, probably, in a rougher and more distressing form. When the Holy One of Israel was rejected, despised, spitted on, scourged, and insulted —when he endured the contradiction of sinners— when he wandered in desolate places, and had "not

where to lay his head"—when, on the view of his approaching crucifixion, he passed through his agony in the garden of Gethsemane—we have every reason to believe, that *the Serpent was bruising the heel of the Seed of the woman.* Finally, that it was the same spiritual adversary who procured the consummation of the sufferings of Jesus—his shameful and cruel death—we may conclude from our Lord's address to his Jewish persecutors, "Ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you..... ye do that which ye have seen with *your Father*"—that is with the *devil:* John viii. 37, 38: *comp.* 44. Again, it is expressly declared by the apostle John, that it was Satan who entered into Iscariot "after the sop," and who put it into the heart of the apostate to betray his Lord: John xiii. 2, 27.

That, during the whole course of the life and ministry of Jesus, there was a very extensive and probably unusual manifestation of Satanic influence, we may indeed collect, not only from the passages which have now been cited, and which describe some of the operations of Beelzebub himself, but from the very numerous accounts, contained in the four Gospels, of persons who were possessed and tormented by his subordinate agents. These persons appear, in an especial manner, to have excited the compassion, and to have claimed the miraculous aid, of him who came to destroy *all the works of the devil.* Now, when we reflect on the exactness with which these circumstances are described—when we recollect the conversations which sometimes took place between Jesus and the evil spirits, and the manner in which they were compelled to confess that he was the Christ, the Son of God—when we call to mind, for example, the instance in which the legion of devils were expelled from the maniac, and permitted, on their earnest entreaty, to enter into the herd of swine—and when, moreover, we remember that the evangelists were no writers of figures and allegories, but plain, accurate, and *inspired* historians—it seems impossible to reject the literal interpretation of these narrations, or to refuse to allow that, at that most important period of the world's

history, the spirits of darkness were permitted, in a very remarkable manner, to display their malignity, their activity, and their power.

The Hebrew word *Satan*, signifies an adversary, and is, by way of eminence, applied as a name to the devil, because he is, of all adversaries, the principal —the most powerful, and the most malicious. He is the *adversary* of God, against whom he has rebelled, whose will he still resists, whose rule he endeavours to disturb. He is the *adversary* of Christ, whom he was at one time permitted to tempt, afflict, and persecute, and whose spiritual dominion over men it is still his constant endeavour to interrupt and impede. Between the Messiah of God, and Belial, the prince of darkness, diametrically opposed to each other, as they are, in all their attributes, in all their operations, and in all their ends, there can indeed be no "concord:" 2 Cor. vi. 15. More especially, Satan is the *adversary* of man, whose loss, both physical and moral, he has so successfully compassed, and is still for ever laboring to aggravate and confirm.

With respect to the former point, our physical loss, we are to remember that sickness, and death, and all their sorrowful train, are the indirect consequences of the *moral fall* into which man was betrayed by Satan. *On particular occasions*, moreover, the sufferings of mortality, whether bodily or mental, are traced immediately, by the inspired writers, to the operation of the adversary. It was by his instrumentality that Job was afflicted in body, family, and estate. The woman who for eighteen years had been "bowed together and could in no wise lift herself," is declared by our Saviour to have been *bound by Satan;* Luke xiii. 11, 16. The maimed, the halt, the withered, the blind, and the lunatic, who were the objects of the miraculous interposition of our Lord's compassion, are all described as persons "oppressed of the devil:" Acts x. 38. And when, in the primitive and apostolic church, the transgressor was to be punished by some temporal disease or other affliction, he was for this purpose *delivered* for a season to the power of the devil:" 1 Cor. v. 5: 1 Tim. i. 20.

The malice of our spiritual enemy however has, in this point of view, been often directed with especial force against the followers and disciples of the Lord Jesus; because, in hindering, buffeting, and persecuting *them*, he interrupts the progress of that word of truth, which it is their privilege to disseminate, and by which, in the end, his own kingdom must be subverted. "Simon, Simon," said Jesus to the apostle Peter, "behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he sift you as wheat:" Luke xxii. 31. When Paul would have visited some of his beloved disciples in the work of the Gospel of Christ, it was Satan who "hindered" him: 1 Thess. ii. 18. The thorn in his flesh, by which that apostle was impeded and distressed in the exercise of his ministry, was the "messenger of Satan to buffet him:" 2 Cor. xii. 7. It was the devil who cast the pious Christians of Smyrna into prison, Rev. ii. 10; and we read that Antipas became the faithful martyr of Jesus, in a place which the prevalence of a persecuting spirit proclaimed to be the seat of Satan: v. 13.

But the opposition of Satan to the true interest of men as well as his enmity against God and Christ, is above all manifested in that main point, alluded to at the outset of the present discussion, that *he is the immediate author of moral evil.* To *his* artifice and influence, as we have already observed, the Scriptures attribute the commission of that first transgression by which Adam and Eve fell from their innocence, and in consequence of which, therefore, the whole family of their descendants have degenerated into a race of sinners. Equally clear is the doctrine of inspiration, that, while we continue in this degenerate, transgressing nature, we are under the *dominion* of our soul's enemy. "And you hath he quickened," says Paul to the Ephesian converts, "who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked, according to the course of this world, *according to the prince of the power of the air; the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*" Ephesians ii. 1, 2. The sinful and idolatrous Gentiles, whom this apostle was sent to evangelize, are elsewhere represented as

under "the power of Satan:" Acts xxvi. 18. It is Satan, according to the doctrine of Jesus himself, who sows "the tares" in the field of the world—and "*the tares are the children of the wicked one:*" Matt. xiii. 38, 39. The vicious and contentious members of the church are described as persons "*taken captive by the devil at his will:*" 2 Timothy ii. 26; *comp.* 1 Timothy v. 15. It was Satan who filled the heart of Ananias to lie: Acts v. 3. The sorcerer Elymas was "the child of the devil:" Acts xiii. 10. Wicked and persecuting Jews constituted the "synagogue of Satan:" Rev. ii. 9. It is by their sins that the children of the devil are made manifest. "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning:" 1 John iii. 8, 10. Nor ought we to forget, that in order to promote and aggravate that moral evil, of which he is thus declared to be the author, he spreads over the fallen children of Adam the veil of gross and perilous ignorance. With all his "principalities and powers," he stands opposed to the progress of divine light. The dominion of Satan is the "power of darkness:" Col. i. 13. Evil spirits are the "rulers of the darkness of this world:" Eph. vi. 12. Their chief is "the God of this world," who "hath *blinded* the minds of them which believe not, *lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them:*" 2 Cor. iv. 4.

As Satan is ever represented as the *tempter* of *man*, the being who invites, allures, entices him into transgressions, so, in order to this end, he is full of wiles and devices: Eph. vi. 11: 2 Cor. ii. 11. While he rejoices in the ignorance of men, it is his policy to involve them more and more deeply in the mazes of error; and, prince as he is of darkness, he knows how to transform himself even "into an angel of light," for the seduction of those who are the objects of his malice: 2 Cor. xi. 14. It is his province to pervert and misapply our reasoning faculties; to raise in us the pride of a false philosophy, and to cheat us with a lie; to impart to virtue the aspect of dreariness and difficulty, and to array vice in a garment of love-

liness. "Ye are of your father, the devil," said Jesus to some of the wicked unbelievers, by whom he was surrounded, "and the lusts of your father ye will do, He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is *no truth in him.* When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; *for he is a liar, and the father of it:*" John viii. 44.

The same powerful being, who thus deceives, degrades, and enslaves, mankind, and who often betrays into transgression even those who are justly numbered among the Lord's servants, is also described as our accuser before God. Such is the principal meaning of that Greek term, applied to the great adversary in so many passages, both of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, from which our own word *devil* is derived.[5] It was as an *accuser* that Satan (in conformity with the forensic custom of the Jews) is represented as standing at the right hand of the angel, (who is acting as the Judge) in order to resist *Joshua* the priest, Zech. iii. 1; and in the book of Revelation this malevolent power is expressly described in the same particular character. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the *accuser of our brethren* is cast down, which *accused them before God day and night:*" Rev. xii. 10.

Finally, in his temptations—in his wiles—in his accusations—the adversary of mankind has still the same object in view; namely, the destruction of our immortal souls. It is in this respect, above all others, that Satan is to be regarded as a "murderer." The apostle declares that he has "the power of death"—not only, we may presume, of the death of the body, but of that spiritual death, by which man may be for ever separated from the light of God's countenance, and from the joys of the kingdom of heaven: Heb. ii. 14. Whether he assumes the aspect of the winding serpent, or of the roaring lion—whether it is by fraud or by violence that he oppresses our fallen race,

[5] διάβολος.

and tempts and sifts the children of the Lord—Satan is still seeking whom he may *devour*, (1 Pet. v. 8.)—whom he may destroy—whom he may plunge into that fathomless ruin which he knows to be his own portion.

And now, in order to complete this scriptural view of the personal operations and history of the spirits of evil, and especially of that powerful being who is chief amongst them in opposing the cause of truth, piety, and virtue, it only remains for us to open the prophetic page, which declares that "everlasting fire" is "*prepared* for the devil and his angels:" Matt. xxv. 41. "And I saw an angel," says the apostle John in describing one of the concluding scenes of his wonderful vision, "come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that, he must be loosed a little season..... And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breath of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day night for ever and ever:*" Rev. xx. 1—10.

In reverting, then, to the statements cited in the present Essay, we are to recollect that the principalities and powers, whose character and history we have now been considering, were created holy and happy—that they abode not in the truth, and fell from their high estate, and thus became the rulers of the kingdom of evil—that their chief or leader, the devil, was the

being who procured the fall of our first parents; who afflicted Job; who provoked David to sin against the Lord; and who resisted the righteous Joshua,—that, in tempting, buffeting, and persecuting, the Messiah, even unto death, the devil *bruised the heel of the seed of the woman*—that, at the same period, his subordinate agents displayed, in a remarkable manner, their activity and malignity—that he is denominated Satan, because he is the *adversary* of God, of Christ, and more especially of mankind—that he is sometimes described as the instrument of the temporal afflictions of men, and especially of those impediments and sufferings by which the servants of God are tried and sifted—that he is ever represented as the author of moral evil, as the ruler of the wicked, as the prince of darkness, as our tempter, deceiver, accuser, and destroyer—lastly, that, although the devil and his angels may rage and prevail for a season, the end which assuredly awaits them is absolute defeat and everlasting punishment.

And now I may venture, in conclusion, to offer to the reader's candid attention a few plain observations on the subject of the present Essay.

When, in the first place, we reflect, with any degree of care, on those scriptural declarations to which we have now adverted, we can scarcely fail to be astonished that any persons who regard the Scriptures as divine, and who pretend to the character of fair interpreters of the Sacred Volume, should deny to the great adversary of souls a personal existence; or should venture to insinuate, that the Satan of the Old and New Testaments is nothing more than a personification of evil—the vain and unsubstantial creature of poetry, allegory, and fiction. It ought ever to be remembered, that the Holy Spirit can neither err nor *feign;* and although there is to be found in the Bible much of poetry, and something perhaps of allegory, yet, as a guide to practice and to doctrine, it can be regarded only as a code of principles, and a record of realities. Besides, the descriptions of Satan are to be found principally in those parts of Scripture which are not poetical, but either historical or simply didactic,

Never were there plainer, or more unsophisticated historians—historians less disposed to indulge in fanciful imagery, or oriental exaggeration—than Moses and the four evangelists, who have severally *in the course of their histories*, presented to our attention the personal character and operations of Satan. To these are to be added Paul, Peter, James, and Jude—those homely, yet luminous, didactic writers, who, as well as our blessed Lord himself, have all made mention of the devil—not as an allegorical figure, but as a powerful, insidious, malicious being.

To imagine that he who reasoned with Eve, and persuaded her to sin; who appeared with the sons of God before the throne of heaven, after walking to and fro on the earth, and obtained permission to try the faith of Job; who tempted Jesus, assailed him with subtle arguments, and said to him, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship ME;" who taught Judas to betray his master; who sent the thorn in the flesh, to buffet the apostle Paul; who transforms himself into an angel of light; who is expressly declared by our Lord to be a murderer, a liar, and the father of lies; who accuses the brethren day and night before the throne of God;—to imagine that such a one is not a person, and has never *existed at all*, is to set at nought the plainest testimonies of Scripture, and to involve ourselves in a heartless, hopeless, nugatory, pyrrhonism. If we would maintain the faith once delivered to the saints, we must uphold the doctrines of Scripture in their genuine simplicity and purity; and among those doctrines, none, I would submit, can be more explicit than that which proclaims the personal character, and powerful operations, of Satan.

In the second place, it may be remarked, that this doctrine of Scripture is not more clear than it is important. It must, surely, be one of the favourite devices of the prince of darkness, to persuade us that he has no existence; for, if he has no existence, there can be no occasion to "*resist*" him; no need for us to stand on our guard, that we may not fall into the snares which he lays around us. On the other hand,

a due sense of the existence and character of our enemy must ever be the means of stimulating the believer to watch, and strive, and pray, against him. On this point, indeed, the voice of Scripture is again decisive. Are we commanded to be sober and vigilant? it is not only because the flesh is weak, but because our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:" 1 Pet. v. 8. Are we exhorted to put on the whole armour of God, to take unto us the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the sword of the spirit? it is that we may be able to "stand against the wiles of the devil:" it is because "we wrestle not against flesh and blood (alone), but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places:" Eph. vi. 11, 12.

The denial of the personality and power of our spiritual adversary, I conceive to be very closely connected with a low and inadequate view of the malignity, the depth, and the danger, of *sin*. Those persons who are weighed down under the burthen of their transgressions—who are well acquainted with the plague of their own hearts—who know what it is to tremble because of the power of temptation, and because of the secret influence of their besetting iniquity—will be little disposed to deny that they have a restless and powerful enemy, against whose aggressions it is absolutely necessary for them earnestly to strive. But, oppressed as the awakened children of God may sometimes find themselves to be, under a sense of the power of Satan, it can never become them to yield to unprofitable discouragement; for they are assured, that *he who is on their side is infinitely wiser and greater than he who is against them.* Their adversary, however powerful, is neither omnipresent, nor omniscient, nor omnipotent; but all these characteristics belong to their Saviour, and their God. Though the influence of Satan may be permitted to spread for a time to an alarming and deplorable extent, the Scriptures afford abundant evidence, that God will vindicate his own cause, and

in due season will establish and complete the dominion of his Christ, over the souls of mankind. In the mean time, he will not fail to arise, in every needful hour, for the help and preservation of those who love and follow their Redeemer. He will scatter all their enemies. He will bestow upon them the happy and glorious victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil.

ESSAY IX.

ON THE SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNT OF MAN.

In attempting a discussion of the nature, history, and character, of Man, as they are unfolded in the Holy Scriptures, I am very sensible of the complicated nature of this comprehensive subject; and I shall therefore invite the reader's attention only to those features of it which appear to be most important, because most essentially connected with the system of religious truth. These are, first, the creation and mortality of man; secondly, the immortality of his soul; thirdly, his resurrection; fourthly, his moral agency and responsibility; fifthly, the eternity of his future happiness or misery; and, lastly, his fall from original righteousness, and his actual depravity.

Section 1. *On the Creation and Mortality of Man.* On the sixth and last day of the creation, after the world had been supplied with every description of inferior animal, we read that God spake as follows: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that

moveth upon the earth:" Gen. i. 26—28. Again, we read, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became *a living soul:*" ii. 7.

The Hebrew word, here rendered "soul,"[6] is one of very extensive and sometimes uncertain meaning. Although it is frequently employed to denote the seat of the affections and thoughts—that part in man which loves, hates, fears, meditates, and worships—yet, at other times it signifies merely the *natural life*, or the *creature by which that natural life is enjoyed.* The last appears to be the meaning of the expression in the passage before us. A living soul is a *living creature;* as we may learn from the fact, that the same expressions (in the original text) are here employed to describe the bird of the air, the fish of the sea, and the beast and reptile of the earth: chap. i. 20—22, 24.[7] "The Lord God formed man of *the dust of the ground;*" and the Hebrew word *Adam*, which, though applied by way of eminence to the first man, is used in that language as the generic name of the race, simply denotes our *earthly origin.* Like the birds, the fishes, the beasts, and the reptiles, man was formed of tangible matter; like them, when Jehovah breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, he became a living creature; and, like them also, when God takes away his breath, he dies, and returns to the dust.

Although we may conclude, from some of the doctrinal parts of Scripture, that if Adam and Eve had not sinned, they would not have died (*see* Rom. v. 12), it is plain, from their history, that they were created *liable* to mortality; and, after their sin had been committed, their mortality was determined and ascertained. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," said Jehovah to his fallen child, "till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return:" Gen. iii. 19. There is, indeed, no volume in the world, which abounds with so many vivid descriptions of the shortness of human life, and of the certainty

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of that death to which we are all hastening, as the volume of Scripture. "Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth," said David, "and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity: Psalm xxxix. 5; *compare* xc. 9, 10. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass:" Isa. xl. 6, 7. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not:" Job xiv. 1, 2. And as the life of a man is but as "a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away:" James iv. 14; so also those outward objects, which here occasion him pleasure and pain, which occupy so much of his attention, and excite so much of his sensibility, are all invariably marked with the same character of brevity and change. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: *for the fashion of this world passeth away:*" 1 Cor. vii. 29—31. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity:" Eccles. i. 2.

SECTION II. *On the Immortality of the soul.* In the history of the creation, the distinction between man and the inferior animals is marked, not by his receiving from the Lord the breath of life, not by his becoming (to adopt the words of our translators) a living soul—but by his being formed *in the image and after the likeness of the Most High God.* That he was so formed in a moral point of view—that he was "created *after God* in righteousness and true holiness"—we shall presently find occasion to observe. But these comprehensive expressions probably include the notion of all those characteristics of humanity which elevate us far above all the lower animals, and from which we derive a faint resemblance to the

Author of our being. Among these characteristics are obviously to be reckoned our faculties of thought, reflection, and reason, by which we are enabled to enjoy communion with our Creator, and, in pursuance of his own edict, to exercise *dominion* over all inferior living creatures: *see* Gen. i. 26; *compare* Psalm viii. 6. Yet the declaration, that man was formed in the image of God, has, in all probability, a yet more especial reference to *an eternity of existence*—to the doctrine that we are endowed with a spiritual substance, which survives the dissolution of its earthly tenement, and lives for ever. "For God created man to be immortal," says the ancient, though probably uninspired, author of the Book of Wisdom, "*and made him to be an image of his own eternity:*" chap. ii. 23.[8]

This higher part of man, which perishes not with his outward frame, and of which his intellectual faculties (though exercised through the instrumentality of bodily organs) may be regarded as an essential property, appears to be very distinctly alluded to in several passages of Scripture, and is by the sacred writers denominated sometimes the *spirit*, and sometimes the *soul*.

It is generally supposed, that Solomon was speaking of the never-dying soul, as it is distinguished from the mere instinctive spirit of beasts, when, in his preaching, he cried, saying, "Who knoweth the *spirit of man that goeth upward*, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" Eccles. iii. 21. So again, in describing the death of man, he says, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the *spirit shall return unto God who gave it:*" xii. 7. When Isaiah wrote, "Hear, and your *soul* shall live:"—Ezekiel, "The *soul* that sinneth, it shall die:"—Micah, "Shall I give the fruit of my body for the sin of my *soul?*" (Isaiah lv. 3; Ezekiel xviii. 20; Micah vi. 7;) it is by no means improbable

[8] Such is the explanation given of the image of God in man by Tertullian. "Habent illas ubique lineas Dei, quâ immortalis anima, quâ libera et sui arbitrii, quâ præscia plerumque, quâ rationalis, capax intellectus et scientiæ." *Contra Marcion.* lib. ii. cap. 9.

that these prophets severally attached to the word "soul" the meaning in which we are ourselves accustomed to employ it—that of the *essential and responsible* part of man. In the New Testament there are various passages to the same effect. Thus it must surely be allowed, that Stephen was speaking, not of his material breath, but of his immortal soul, when, in the view of immediate death, he lifted up the voice of supplication, saying, "Lord Jesus, *receive my spirit:*" Acts vii. 59. When the apostles wrote of the salvation of the *soul*, the purification of the *soul*, and the confidence of the *soul* in its Redeemer, *see* James i. 21; v. 20: 1 Peter i. 9, 22: Heb. vi. 19: we may reasonably conclude, that by the *soul* they intended to express the never-dying spirit within us. Again, in the book of Revelation, we read that the apostle John, in his vision, beheld under the altar "the *souls* of them that were slain for the word of God." vi. 9—"the *souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God:" xx. 4. Lastly, our Lord himself appears to have employed the word "soul" in this peculiar sense, when he said to his disciples, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the *soul:* but rather fear him which is able to destroy both *soul* and body in hell:" Matt. x. 28.

When Jesus thus exhorted his followers, he plainly promulgated the doctrine, that, although men are able to destroy the bodies of one another, they have no power to annihilate the soul—that, in other words, the annihilation of the soul is not effected by the death or destruction of the body—that when the body dies, therefore, the soul *continues* to exist. The *body*, which is justly described, by two inspired apostles, as the "tabernacle"—the tent in which the soul resides for a season—is laid aside in death, and is presently resolved into its original dust, *see* 2 Cor. v. 1; 2 Pet. i. 13: but the higher and more essential part of man, although invisible to mortal eye, preserves its identity, and is introduced to a new sphere of existence and action—a new scene either of pain or of pleasure. That, during the interval which takes place between

the death of the body and the resurrection of the dead, man is not in a state of absolute insensibility or annihilation, as some persons have vainly imagined, but in a condition either of suffering or of rejoicing, the New Testament contains a variety of evidence, which, although in some degree indirect, is nevertheless clear and satisfactory.

First, with respect to the impenitent wicked, their lot, during the separate state of existence, is described as one of pain and punishment, or, in language more or less metaphorical (and in what degree it is metaphorical no man can pretend to decide), as one of *fire* and *imprisonment*. Although our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus probably presents to our view a fictitious history, yet we have every reason to allow that the *doctrines* which it so clearly conveys to our understanding are the doctrines of absolute truth. The rich man, who refused to exercise the offices of Christian charity towards his afflicted neighbour, *dies;* and, while his body is mouldering in the grave—while his relations are continuing to live on the earth—he is himself described as being in hell, a victim to the devouring flames: Luke xvi. 23. Again, we read, in a passage of the First Epistle of Peter, that Jesus Christ was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also he went and preached unto the *spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah:*" 1 Pet. iii. 18—20. Although this passage is in some respects of doubtful interpretation, it will, I believe, be found to be explicit as far as relates to the point now before us. For, whether we understand it as declaratory of the doctrine, that Jesus, after his crucifixion, "descended into hell," or as conveying the far more probable idea, that, in his preexistence and divine nature, he preached to the antediluvians by his prophet Noah,—it is evident that the apostle speaks of the spirits of that ancient race of sinners, as being, at the time when he wrote, "*in prison.*"[9]

[9] *Vide Schleusner. Lex. voc.* πνεῦμα, No. 4. "De defunctorum animis πνεῦμα quoque legitur, Heb. xiii. 23; 1 Pet. iii. 19; ubi,

Secondly, with respect to the righteous, we are again and again instructed that they live after the death of the body, and live in happiness. When Lazarus, in the parable, escaped from those shackles of mortality in which he so greatly suffered, he is represented as finding his refuge and consolation in the bosom of Abraham: Luke xvi. 22. Nor can we forget the memorable expressions employed by our Saviour, when he was conversing with the Sadducees respecting the doctrine of a future life, and respecting that *first* resurrection of which we are now speaking: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living:*" Matt. xxii. 29—32. When, therefore, God spake these words to Moses out of the burning bush, it is certain that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had long since paid the debt of nature, were nevertheless *living*. So also in the history of our Lord's transfiguration, it is recorded that *Moses* and *Elias* appeared and talked with him; and the disciples would have erected three tabernacles —one for Jesus, and one for each of these his ancient and glorified servants: Matt. xvii. 3, 4.

When the penitent and converted thief, who was the companion of our Lord in his crucifixion, supplicated for his mercy and cried out, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," Jesus answered him (in words which may well be deemed completely decisive of the question now under discussion)—"Verily, I say unto thee, *To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise:*" Luke xxiii. 42, 43. [1]

per τὰ ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύματα, animæ flagitiosorum, Noachi coævorum, corpore exules, intelligendæ sunt."

[1] Ἀμὴν λεγω σοι, σήμερον μετ' ἐμοῦ ἔσῃ ἐν τῷ πάραδείσῳ. "Pessime fecerunt qui hanc vocem aut cum λέγω *dico* conjunxerunt (quod aperte improbat Syrus) aut interpretati sunt σήμερον *hodie*,

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christians are exhorted to be diligent in their religious course, after the example of the saints already glorified—to be "followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit (that is, as in the Greek, are *inheriting*[2]) the promises," (v. 12;) and, in reference to the same subject, it is declared, in a following chapter of this Epistle, that we are not "come unto the mount that might be touched, &c.; but unto Mount Zion.....and to an innumerable company of angels: to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.....and to the *spirits of just men made perfect:*"[3] xii. 18—23. But it is in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, that the apostle Paul has most clearly indicated the truth, that, when they are delivered from the confinement of their earthly tabernacle, the servants of Christ are alive in heaven—alive with their Lord. "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens....Therefore, we are always confident, knowing, that whilst we are *at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord* (for we walk by faith, not by sight): we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be *absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord:*" 2 Cor. v. 1—8. So, again, to the Philippians, he says, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire *to depart and to be with Christ*, which is far better: nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you:" i. 23. Lastly, it was long previously to his vision of the resurrection, and of the day of final retribution, that the apostle John, in the Revelation, was permitted to hear the elders, in a state of glory, singing their new song, in honour of him who

post resurrectionem. Christus plus promittit, quam erat rogatus. *Rogas,* inquit, *ut olim tui sim memor cum Regni possessionem accepero: ego tam diu non differam tua vota: sed partem et primitias speratæ felicitatis tibi intra hunc ipsum diem repræsentabo: morere securus, a morte statim te divina solatia expectant:*" *Grotii Com. in loc.*

[2] κληρονομούντων. [3] *Vide Schleusner. Lex. voc.* Πνεῦμα.

"*had redeemed them to God by his blood*," v. 9; and, on a subsequent occasion, to behold "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," who "stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands"—persons, who had already passed through all their tribulations, and had entered into unspeakable joy, because they had "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb:" vii. 9—14.

SECTION III. *On the Resurrection of the Dead.* While the passages of Scripture, which thus unfold to us some of the hidden mysteries of the separate state of existence, afford an ample evidence that there is in us a living substance, by which our identity is preserved, and which cannot die, there is yet another point of view in which man is represented, by the inspired writers, as the heir of an endless futurity. In an awful day to come, his mortal part shall put on immortality; his corruptible shall be clothed with incorruption; the man who sleeps in the dust of the earth shall be quickened—shall be raised from a state of death—shall stand alive before the judgment-seat of the Almighty.

This doctrine, though fully revealed in its several majestic particulars only under the dispensation of the Gospel, was by no means entirely unknown to the ancient Israelitish church. It cannot with reason be denied, that Job spake of his *resurrection* from the dead, when, with so much emphasis, he declared his faith in that Redeemer by whom this wonderful change will be effected: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, *yet in my flesh shall I see God:* whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me:" Job xix. 15—27. The same subject must have been opened to the view of David, when, primarily, in reference to the Messiah, and, secondarily, in relation to himself, he used the following expressions: "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (or rather, my life

or person in the grave); neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore:" Psalm xvi, 10, 11. And again, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, *when I awake*, with thy likeness:" Psalm xvii. 15. Lastly, in the Book of Daniel, we have a yet clearer exhibition of the doctrine in question: "And at that time," said the angel to the prophet, "shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people.....And many of them (or the multitude of them) that sleep in the dust of the earth shall *awake;* some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt:" xii. 1. 2.[4]

In the passage now cited from the prophecies of Daniel, the doctrine of *resurrection* is brought forward in immediate connection with that of *retribution;* and we are assured by him of the truth, that *both the good and the wicked* shall rise from the dead. That truth was afterwards declared, in terms which appear to be too clear to admit of any misconception, by Jesus Christ himself: "The hour is coming," said he to the Jews, "in the which *all* that are *in the graves shall hear his voice*, (the voice of the Son of God,) and *shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resur-*

[4] Heb. ורבים מישני אדמת עפר יקיצו. The plural adjective רבים is often used to denote *οἱ πολλοὶ—the many or the multitude; vide* Exod. xxiii. 2; Psalm xcvii. 1; cix. 30; Ezek. xxxi. 5; *comp.* Rom. v. 19. Or this word may be the plural of the substantive רב multitude; in which case the Hebrew ought to be rendered, "et multitudines ex iis qui dormiunt, &c."—a version which would imply the distinction, afterwards more clearly enunciated, between the multitude of the good and the multitude of the wicked; and such a sense of the passage the Jews appear to have indicated by a *distinctive* accent. Some critics, and amongst others that ancient enemy of Christianity, Porphyry, have explained this passage as relating to the liberation of the Jews, by the hands of Judas Maccabæus, from the yoke of Antiochus. But if the prophecy has any subordinate reference to that event, which seems very improbable, yet, the explicit and awfully descriptive terms in which it is couched appear to afford an almost irresistible evidence, that its principal subject is the general resurrection of the dead: *vide Poli Syn. and especially Grotii Com. in loc.*

rection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation:" John v. 28, 29. I cannot perceive that these pointed and plain expressions are capable of being explained in any merely metaphorical sense; and accordingly it may be observed, that the apostles of our Lord (who, either by verbal communication or by spiritual illumination, derived from him their whole doctrinal system) uphold the same expectation of the actual raising up of the dead, both of the good and of the wicked, in order to their being rewarded according to their works. When Paul was making his apology before Felix, he said, "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers..... and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there *shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust:*" Acts xxiv. 14, 15. 'And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, says John in the Revelation, in evident allusion to the very same doctrine....." and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged, out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell (or the grave) delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works:*" Rev. xx. 11—13.

In these several passages, no distinction is pointed out between the manner of the resurrection of the good, and the manner of the resurrection of the wicked. Both descriptions of men are simply represented as rising, and rising in order to be judged. But the resurrection of the righteous will nevertheless be unquestionably distinguished by glorious circumstances, altogether peculiar to themselves. Often is it described as connected with a scene of unmixed joy and happiness—as the *consummating event* by which Christians are to be introduced to their crown of glory —as a privilege, which, when viewed in all its parts, is exclusively their own. "And this is the will of him

that sent me" said the Lord Jesus, "that *every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him,* may have everlasting life; and *I will raise him up at the last day:*" John vi. 40. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and *I will raise him up at the last day:*" verse 54. The Epistles of Paul, more especially, abound in declarations respecting the final resurrection of the righteous: and so deeply was this subject engraven on his mind; so present was the prospect in his view; so much was he accustomed to regard this future event as the means appointed for the *completion* of the Christian's hope and consolation; that, when he speaks of the glorious expectations of the saints in the church militant, it is often their resurrection from the dead, rather than the immortality of their souls, upon which he dwells and expatiates. "God," he says, "hath both raised up the Lord and will also raise up us by his own power:" 1 Cor. vi. 14. "He which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you:" 2 Cor. iv. 14. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.....for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. *Wherefore comfort one another with these words:*"[5] 1 Thess. iv. 13—18.

[5] Ἡμεῖς δὲ οἱ ζῶντες, λέγων, οὐ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ φήσιν (οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄχρι τῆς ἀναστασέως ἔμελλε ζῆν) ἀλλὰ τοὺς πιστοὺς λέγει· διὸ προσέθηκεν, οἱ περιλειπόμενοι εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ Κυρίου. Ἐν γὰρ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ προσώπῳ πάντας τοὺς τότε εὑρεθησομένους ζῶντας δηλοῖ.

'When he says "*we which are alive,*" he does not speak of himself, for he was not to live (*i. e.* in the body) until the resur-

The apostle Peter declares that God "hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the *resurrection of Jesus Christ:*" and he assures us, that the eternal and undefiled inheritance which is enjoyed by the risen Saviour is reserved for us also, "who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed *in the last time:*" 1 Pet. i. 3—5. This particular view of the subject is largely explained by Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians. Christ rose from the dead through the power of the Father; and his resurrection is not only the prototype or pattern, but the sure and certain *pledge* of ours. "But now," says the apostle, "is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But, every man in his own order: Christ, the first fruits: afterward they that are Christ's, at his coming:" 1 Cor. xv. 20—23. Jesus Christ, the Captain of our Salvation, is "the first-born from the dead;" and when that day shall arrive which is appointed for the termination of his mediatorial reign, and for the consummation of the whole Christian economy, he will complete the gracious designs of the Father Almighty, by raising his followers from death, and by changing those amongst them who shall be still alive, that all may be thenceforth conformed to his image in glory. Now, if there be still introduced the question which the apostle, in his argument on the subject, supposes to be addressed to him by his opponent, "*How* are the dead raised up, and *with what body* do they come?"—we may answer, in the first place, as the apostle answered, "*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption,*" (ver. 50;) and, in the second place, we may adduce the clear doctrine of Scripture, that the body which, in that glorious

rection, but of the believers in general; as appears by his addition: "*and remain unto the coming of the Lord.*" For, by the first person he expresses *all* (the believers) who shall at that time be found alive.' *Theophylact after Chrysostom, in loc.*

day, will be bestowed upon the saints, is a spiritual body, resembling the body of Christ himself. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," said the apostle John to the primitive Christians; "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be *like him*, for we shall see him as he is:" 1 John iii. 2. "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man, Adam, was made a living soul: the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" 1 Cor. xv. 44—49; *comp.* Phil. iii. 20, 21. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, *who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body*, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Thus it is that the Redeemer of mankind will complete his career of victory over every opposing power, by destroying that last enemy —*death*. "Behold," says the apostle, "I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality: then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY:" 1 Cor. xv. 51—54.

Such, then, are the principles on which the Scriptures teach us that the child of Adam, however vain and transitory in one point of view, is nevertheless *born for eternity*. He has within him a never-dying spirit; and even that part of him which is destined to moulder in the grave shall, in the end, be found the

seed of a spiritual body, and shall be clothed with incorruption and immortality. If he is wicked and disobedient—after his death, he is reserved, in pain and darkness, for the righteous judgment of God: after his resurrection, that judgment will be consummated. If he is righteous—when he dies, his disembodied soul ascends into regions of bliss: when he is raised from the dead, the whole man will be renovated, and will enter into the fulness of the glory of Christ.

SECTION IV. *On the Moral agency of Man.*—The view which has now been taken of that future state of existence, to which we are all hastening, naturally leads to the consideration of the next point of our subject—the *moral agency of man.* The broad line of distinction which subsists between our species and all inferior animals is formed not only by our reasoning and intellectual powers, but by our capacity for this moral agency. Man alone, of all creatures of God upon earth, is capable of being virtuous or vicious, righteous or sinful; and therefore Man alone, of all those creatures, is the proper subject of that retributive system which constitutes the most important part of the moral government of the Deity.

In reference to this branch of our subject, it is to be observed, in the first place, that the standard of righteousness is ever represented in Scripture to be simply and exclusively the will of the Supreme Being. In the view of prophets and apostles, righteousness is no creature of human philosophy, formed on a principle of worldly and social expediency, but a real conformity with the moral law of God. And that law, whether regarded in its outward form, as revealed and detailed in the Bible, or in its more extensive internal operation, as written by the finger of God on the heart, is nothing more or less than the *expression* of so much of the divine will as is manifested for our guidance as moral agents. On the other hand, sin consists in disobedience to the will of God, because "sin is the transgression of the law:" 1 John iii. 4. And here we ought, in passing, to observe, that the more we are made acquainted with the absolute purity

of the supreme Being, the more we shall comprehend the extent and exactness of the requisitions of his law, and the more clearly shall we discern the malignity, and detect the various appearances, of moral evil.

As man is capable of righteousness or of sin, of obedience or disobedience to the revealed will of God, so, in the second place, he is free to choose between the one and the other. I shall not attempt, on the present occasion, to argue those abstruse questions of philosophical necessity and divine decrees, in the discussion of which the pride of men's reason has often betrayed them into dangerous errors—into conclusions which have been at once false in principle and fatal in operation. That there are difficulties connected with these questions, no man can reasonably deny; and these difficulties may, according to my apprehension, be safely left among "the hidden things" of God. But, whatever be our opinions on the nature and extent of divine predestination, it suffices for our present purpose—and it will, I trust, be allowed by Christians of every name—that, under the dispensations revealed to us in the Scriptures, and *in a practical point of view*, man is ever treated and dealt with by his Supreme Lord and Governor as a *free agent;* as one who *can* obey or disobey; as one who *can* be virtuous or vicious; as one who *can* choose either the evil or the good. Every thing that is preceptive and hortative in Scripture; all the tender invitations, all the fervent persuasions to virtue, with which it abounds; all its terrifying menaces, and all its exhibitions of the prize of our high calling in Christ,—are obviously founded on this great principle. Cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek good, and eschew evil; pursue righteousness, and depart from iniquity,—is the voice of the whole Bible; and it is a voice addressed to man, not as a blind and senseless instrument, but as a reasonable, a free, unfettered, moral, agent. "See," said the Lord to Israel, "I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.....I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore CHOOSE LIFE,

that both thou and thy seed may live:" Deut. xxx. 15, 19.

Placed as he is in this transitory scene of existence, with good and evil, life and death, set before him, man nevertheless is not his own master. In conformity with the plain dictates of natural religion, he is ever represented in Scripture as *responsible* to the Supreme Being. God is our Creator. He is the essential and original source from which we derive our being and all our possessions, physical and mental, temporal and spiritual. His, and his alone, are all that we have, and all that we are. Not only, therefore, are we subject to his sovereign disposal, but, as creatures formed for a purpose of his glory, and endowed for a time with the *tenure* of his property, we are *stewards;* and it is in precise conformity with the unalterable principles of justice that, in a future day, we shall be called upon to render unto our Lord the account of our stewardship.

Now, as virtue consists in a conformity with the will of God, as it is revealed in his moral law, so it is only by a life of virtue—by the application of virtuous principles to the circumstances and occasions of life—that we can make that profitable use which the Lord requires at our hands of all his precious gifts—of our bodies and souls, of our physical and intellectual powers, of our temporal happiness, of our times and opportunities, of our spiritual callings and endowments. And, on the other hand, as sin is the infraction of that divine law which thus teaches us to be faithful in his service, so a life of sin will ever be found to consist in the continued *disuse* or *misapplication* of the gifts of our Almighty Creator. Never was this subject unfolded to mankind with so much force and clearness as by our Saviour, in his memorable parable of the talents. While we learn from that parable, that God will regulate his account of our stewardship with a perfect equity, and that every man's profiting will be tried according to that which he hath, and not according to that which he hath not; and, while it affords some reason to believe that, in the world to come, there will be various degrees

of glory or suffering, according to the degrees of our virtue or our vice, it nevertheless plainly inculcates the lesson, that, *whatever* may be the situation and condition of man upon earth, he must answer for the use of whatever talents he has received, at the bar of the God of all flesh. It is to the good steward *alone* that the gracious sentence will be addressed: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "The unprofitable servant" will be cast "into outer darkness—there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth:" Matt. xxv. 21, 30.

Lastly, therefore, it appears, that, since man is capable either of righteousness or of sin—since he is made free to choose between the evil and the good—and since, in all his thoughts, words, and actions, he is *responsible* to his Creator, he is also properly liable to the *judgment* of God. In this world, all men are placed in a state of trial; and here the moral government of the Deity is carried into effect only *in part:* in the world to come, it will be completed; and the lot of all men will be fixed by the eternal Son of God, (to whom all judgment is committed) *according to their works.* And this judgment is uniformly described by the sacred writers as resulting in the life and happiness of the righteous—the reward of virtue; in the misery and destruction of the wicked—the punishment of sin. "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ:" Rom. xiv. 10. God "hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained:" Acts xvii. 31. God "will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality—eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil,—of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good—to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:" Rom. ii.

6—10. "As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father:" Matt. xiii. 40—43.

SECTION V. *On the Eternity of Future Rewards and Punishments*—The reward of righteousness, and the punishment of iniquity, in the world to come, are both, by inspired writers, described as *everlasting*. "Eternal glory," "eternal salvation," "eternal life," —these are the terms (especially the last of them) which, in very numerous passages of the New Testament, represent the condition of never-ending felicity, reserved for all who fear God, believe in Jesus, and work righteousness. On the other hand, it is expressly declared of those who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and generally of all persons who continue subject, in their life and conversation, to the world, the flesh, and the devil, that they "shall be punished with *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power:" 2 Thess. i. 9. Very explicit is the declaration made of this doctrine, in both its parts, by the Son of God himself—by him in whom (be it remembered) are hid all the treasures, not only of wisdom and knowledge, but of mercy, compassion, and love. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand (those who are soon afterwards described as 'the righteous') 'Come, ye blessed of my Father: inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.....Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand (the selfish and the wicked,

who are here described as neglecting their duty to God and man), Depart from me, ye cursed, into *everlasting fire*, prepared for the devil and his angels.... *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal:*" Matt. xxv. 31—46.

Thus it appears, that the very same record from which, if we are faithful and obedient, we derive our hopes of the incorruptible, immortal, crown of righteousness, declares to us, in terms equally emphatic, that the punishment of a life of sin is *never-ending* misery.

It has indeed been remarked, that the Greek adjective, rendered in this passage "eternal" and "everlasting" (for it is the same word in both instances [6]), is one of indefinite meaning, and sometimes expresses a duration of great and uncertain length, yet short of a real eternity. This observation is well founded; for neither the Greek nor the Hebrew language supplies any single word which unequivocally and uniformly denotes a proper eternity. "Eternal life," in its literal interpretation, is the "life of ages," and "everlasting punishment," the "punishment of ages. Readily, however, as this allowance may be made, there are many strong reasons —reasons which, on the whole, appear to be quite irresistible—for our acceding to the commonly-received interpretation of this awful term in both parts of the passage before us. These reasons may now be briefly stated.

1. Although the adjective here used is in its nature indefinite, and sometimes expresses a duration which will end, yet it ought to be remembered, that it is very usually employed to express an absolute eternity. Thus, out of the seventy-one instances of its occurrence in the New Testament, there are only four in which it is supposed, by the generality of biblical critics, to bear a less comprehensive signification; and even in these four instances the word is capable, I would submit, of being understood in its highest sense: *see* Rom. xvi. 25: 2 Tim. i. 9: Titus i. 2: Philem. 15: *vide Schleusner. Lex. in loc.*

[6] αἰώνιος.

2. A sound judgment may generally be formed respecting the extent of the meaning of this and similar terms, from a consideration of the acknowledged nature of the persons, beings, or substances, to which it is applied. If, for example, we read that a human dynasty is to endure for ever, we naturally understand the expression "for ever," as relating only to a long and indefinite duration; but if we find it declared that the reign of God or of Christ is everlasting, we of course receive the term "everlasting" in its fullest sense. Now, I presume it will be allowed, that our Lord is here speaking of mankind, not as dying creatures, but with reference to their immortal nature: for the doctrine on which this passage, and all similar passages of Scripture, are grounded—a doctrine understood and received by the plurality of those persons amongst whom our Lord exercised his ministry—was this: that "*God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity;*" *Wisd. Sol.* ii. 23, *comp. Joseph. de Bell. Jud.* lib. ii. cap. viii. § 14. The never-dying man may be lost, or he may be saved: in either case he exists for ever; and it is to his everlasting existence that the Scriptures plainly annex either happiness or misery.

We feel no difficulty in applying the principle of interpretation now stated to everlasting life, and to all the glorious privileges which are to be enjoyed, during a boundless future, by the servants and children of God. We know that man is, in one point of view, by *nature* immortal; and therefore, when we read of his enjoying *eternal* happiness, peace, and glory (and all these notions are included in the word *life*), we conclude, at once, that of this happiness, peace, and glory, there will be no end; nor does it appear that any critic has ever denied that a real eternity is, in all *these* examples, denoted by the word "eternal." It is not that happiness, peace, and glory, are in themselves necessarily eternal, for they may often be bestowed only for a season: it is that they are described as appertaining to an immortal being, *in reference to his immortality.* Now, the same principle, obviously

applies to the interpretation of those passages in Scripture which declare the eternal sufferings of the wicked. Pain and sorrow are often indeed inflicted for a time: but when the future pain and sorrow of the wicked are mentioned, we conclude that they can never end, because they are equally described *as eternal*, and equally represented as attaching to a being who cannot die, in *reference to his immortality*. Besides, the two branches of the doctrine are in this passage placed in *opposition* to one another. Since, then, we here understand the word "eternal," when it relates to the happiness of the righteous, in its fullest sense, it would certainly be an unwarrantable departure from the laws of a just and sound philology, did we refuse to receive the same term, used in the same sentence, and applied to the same immortal being, in its fullest sense also, when the opposite and corresponding branch of the doctrine is brought forward, and when the term relates to the misery of the wicked.

3. One of the criteria, by which we may be the most assisted in determining the meaning of any doctrinal passage of the New Testament, will often be found in the known theological opinions of the Jews, at the Christian era. Now, it is certain that the doctrine of future rewards and punishments was then commonly received amongst that people, and upheld in a very zealous manner, more especially by those orthodox sects (as they were generally reputed) the Essenes and the Pharisees. And, since we are in possession of evidence, in the works of Josephus, that the punishments inflicted on the wicked, in a future world, were considered by the Essenes and the Pharisees to be *unceasing* and *ever-enduring*, we may reasonably conclude that this was the only sense in which our Lord's expressions could be understood by his hearers: the only sense, therefore, in which they can rightly be interpreted in the present day.[7]

[7] Speaking of the opinions of the Essenes, respecting the misery of the souls of the wicked after death, Josephus says, ταῖς δὲ φαύλαις, ζοφώδη καὶ χειμέριον ἀφορίζονται μυχὸν, γέμοντα τιμωριῶν ἀδιαλείπτων. "But to wicked souls they allot a dark

4. Our Lord declares, that the "everlasting fire," to which the wicked are to be consigned, is prepared for "the devil and his angels." The wicked, therefore, are to participate in the *same* punishment as is the lot of the higher powers of darkness. Now, the punishment of these evil spirits is elsewhere described as eternal, in still more powerful and unequivocal language than is employed in the passage before us. We are told that it must continue "*day and night for ever and ever :*" Rev. xx. 10. The punishments of the wicked—the children of Satan—are indeed set before us in another passage of the Revelation, in the very same terms. "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for *ever and ever :* and they have no rest *day nor night,* who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name :" xiv. 11.

5. The positive declaration pronounced by Jesus Christ, respecting the eternity of the happiness and life of the righteous, and of the punishment of the wicked, corresponds with other passages in his discourses, in which the same doctrine is promulgated in negative form : "Verily, verily, I say unto you,

and wintry abyss, full of punishments, which *cease not.*" The doctrine of the Pharisees he states as follows : ψυχὴν δὲ πᾶσαν μὲν ἄφθαρτον, μεταβαίνειν δὲ εἰς ἕτερον σῶμα τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν μόνην, τὴν δὲ τῶν φαύλων, ἀΐδιῳ τιμωρίᾳ κολάζεσθαι· "That every soul is immortal; that the soul of the righteous only enters into another body ; but that the soul of the wicked is consigned to ever-enduring punishment :" *De Bell. Jud.* lib. II. cap. 8. sect. xi. xiv. It may, indeed, be remarked, that the terms ἀδιάλειπτος and ἀΐδιος, like the term αἰώνιος, do not *necessarily* express an absolute eternity. Nevertheless, since we find the doctrine of eternal punishments described by writers nearly cotemporary, with so considerable a variety of language—since the terms used are uniformly such as may be most properly construed in the sense of a real eternity—and since none of these writers afford the least hint that any thing short of it was intended to be expressed by them —we may safely conclude, that the doctrine in question was held by the Jews and Christians of that date, in the same sense, and with the same force, as in the present day.

if a man keep my saying, he shall *never see death*:" John viii. 51. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall *never die*." John xi. 26. So, on the other hand, of the "fire" and the "worm" which represent the future sufferings of the wicked, our Lord has left on record, that the one is unquenchable, and the other immortal. "If thy hand offend thee," said he, "cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that *never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched:*" Mark ix. 43, 44.

Since, then, the word rendered *everlasting* in Matt. xxv. 46, is so generally employed, in the New Testament, to denote an absolute eternity; since, in that passage, its meaning is fixed by its application to mankind in reference to their immortality, and by the fact, that eternal happiness and eternal punishment are there placed in opposition to each other; since future rewards and punishments were understood to be everenduring, by the Jews who were cotemporary with Christ; since the punishment of sinful men is represented as the same with that which is allotted to the evil spirits; and since the sufferings of the wicked in another world are elsewhere *negatively* described as everlasting—it seems impossible to deny, that the doctrine of the infinite duration of punishment is a doctrine of Scripture. I cannot, however, conclude these remarks, without briefly considering this branch of our subject on a somewhat different, though perfectly accordant, principle.

Although the sufferings of the wicked in a future world, occasioned as they are by a separation from that Being who is the only real source of happiness, are rightly represented to us as a *punishment*, they may also be regarded as the *natural* and *necessary* result of a life of sin. If we inquire what it is which principally constitutes the joys of heaven, there are many passages of Scripture from which we learn, that it is the immediate and glorious presence of our God and Saviour. Into that presence nothing that is defiled can ever enter: it is the habitation of the angels of God, and of redeemed and purified spirits; and

these alone are capable of the chaste and holy enjoyments of paradise and heaven.

On the other hand, the impenitent sinner is separated from God, even here; he cannot endure the light of the divine countenance; he flees and hides himself from the Lord, as from his greatest enemy; and, if this be the condition in which the change from life to eternity overtakes him, it is unquestionable that he will find his proper element, not in the pure atmosphere of the celestial regions, not in the society of saints and angels, not in the immediate and glorious presence of God and of the Lamb; but in outer darkness—in the mansions of death and dismay—in the company of those fallen powers and principalities to whose destructive sway he has hitherto been subject.

Now, as these positions are evidently consistent both with the declarations of Scripture and with the dictates of a sound moral philosophy; so it is equally clear, from the tenor of true religion, both natural and revealed, that the present life is the only time appointed for our probation, and for that recovery from a condition of moral degradation by which we may be fitted for the pure and never-ending joys of the just made perfect. When we reflect on the afflictions of the righteous, and on the frequent prosperity of the wicked — on the innumerable circumstances which are here permitted to interrupt the yet evident *tendency* of the divine government to a perfect system of reward and punishment—we are insensibly led (independently of revelation) not only to confess the high probability of a future state, but also to affix to the present world the character of *trial*, and to the world to come that of ascertained and settled *retribution*. And certainly we cannot take the Scriptures for our guide without being confirmed as to the soundness of these apprehensions. For, while the inspired writers *never* make mention of our future state of being, otherwise than as one of happiness or misery, of reward or punishment, they describe the present life *alone* as the period in which, "with fear and trembling," we may "work out" our "own salvation." That this *only* is the accepted time and the day of salvation; that

the day's work is to be done *now*, and that "the night cometh wherein no man worketh;" that, after the bridegroom has once entered into the marriage-chamber, the door is shut, and cannot again be opened—these are principles which are plainly recorded, and which, in every scriptural exhortation to timely faith, repentance, and obedience—in every injunction to diligence, watchfulness, and readiness, for the Lord's coming—are as plainly *implied*. Nor have we any reason whatever to imagine that, when the opportunity thus bestowed upon mankind shall have passed away, there can ever be found, in the society of devils, and in that confirmed condition of darkness, degradation, and separation from God, which will be the lot of impenitent sinners in the world of future retribution, any thing of a curative or redeeming tendency—any thing which can be the means of preparing us for a holy and heavenly inheritance.

If, then, these things are true—if hell is indeed the natural element of the wicked—if this life is indeed the only time (as all Scripture plainly leads us to believe) appointed for our probation and moral recovery—then it assuredly follows, that those who die in their sins are for ever excluded from those pleasures which are at the right hand of God. "Ye shall die in your sins," said Jesus to the unbelieving Jews; "whither I go, ye CANNOT COME:" John viii. 21. And if it is true that man, who was formed after the image of an eternal God, will never *cease to be*, we must also conclude that the sufferings entailed on the wicked, by this exclusion from the divine presence, will have no termination.[8]

[8] This view of the subject, like the preceding one, was familiar to the early Jews. In a rabbinical work, entitled *Midrash and Cohaleth, (fol.* 74, 2, 3*)*, there is to be found a curious commentary upon the following words: "*That which is perverted, no man can rectify.*" "In this world," says the commentator, "those things which are perverted can be rectified, and those things which fail can be numbered; but in that future state, that which is perverted *cannot* be rectified, and that which fails cannot be numbered." This Jewish doctor then proceeds to exemplify his doctrine by a parable respecting two men who had been engaged in a life of sin together. The one is cut off in his sins.

On the whole, then, the doctrine of eternal rewards and punishments is far too clearly promulgated in the Sacred Volume to be denied by the consistent Christian. That which Scripture declares clearly, decisively, frequently, must on our parts be received with silent and willing submission; and, however deeply mysterious this doctrine may be to our limited and inadequate comprehension, our true wisdom will be found, not in restless attempts to explain away the declarations of Divine Truth, but in sincere and earnest endeavours to lay hold, ere it be too late, of the salvation of God, and to *flee from the wrath to come.*

SECTION VI. *On the Fall and Depravity of Man.* In order that we may form a just view of our whole subject, we ought, in conclusion, to consider the testimonies of inspiration on one remaining point—namely, *the actual moral character of mankind.*

I have already observed, that when Adam was endowed with intellectual powers, with supreme authority over inferior animals, and with an immortal spirit, he was made "in the image, and after the likeness of God." But, there was still another particular, in which that image and likeness were imparted to him. He was created *holy;* and, being thus a partaker in the moral attributes of his Heavenly Father, he lived for a time in his original paradise, *without sin.* Yet was he liable to temptation, and free to choose between the evil and the good; and when, through the power of the spiritual adversary, he was betrayed into a direct transgression of the revealed will of God, he fell from his pristine state of innocence and happiness,

The other takes warning from the event, repents, and is converted. In the world of retribution, the former is found in a state of torment; the latter with the just in heaven. When the punished sinner pretends that he and his friend, who had sinned together, ought together to have reaped the fruits of their iniquity, and when he entreats that he also may *now* be allowed an opportunity for repentance, it is answered, "Thou fool! knowest thou not that this world (of retribution) is like the sabbath; but the world from which thou hast come, like the evening preparation for the sabbath? *If a man prepares nothing on the evening before the sabbath, what shall he have to eat during the sabbath day?*" See *Schoetgen. in Hor. Heb.* Matt. xxv. 46.

became *prone to sin*, and instead of being any longer by nature the heir of immortal happiness, was subjected to the sentence of eternal death. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die:" Ezekiel xviii. 20.

Now, the Scriptures teach us, that the fall of our first parent, from a condition of natural righteousness to one of natural sinfulness,—from a condition, in which he was the heir of the blessing, to one, in which he was the subject of the curse,—was the immediate cause of a moral degeneracy, and therefore of a punishable guilt, in the whole family of his descendants. The apostle expressly states the doctrine, that "by *one man* sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"—that "through the offence of one many are dead"—that "the judgment was by one to condemnation"—that "by one man's offence death reigned by one"—that "*by one man's disobedience many were made sinners*"—that "in Adam *all die:*" Rom. v. 12—19: 1 Cor. xv. 22.

As the Scriptures alone trace the moral degradation of our species to the event out of which it arose, so are they distinguished by the peculiar force and precision with which they *describe* that moral degradation, and uphold it to view as a *characteristic* of the human race. For the whole system of scriptural religion is grounded on a truth which never found a place in moral philosophy of human origin—that man is by nature fallen and depraved, and can be saved from the consequences of sin only by *divine mercy*, and from its power only by *divine grace*. Often, indeed, do the sacred writers expatiate on the character of the righteous; and these are they who have renounced all dependance on themselves, and who are "*kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation:*" but the question now to be considered is this: What is the account given to us in the Sacred Volume of man *without* grace—of man in his natural and unregenerate condition?

I. In answer to this inquiry, it may be remarked, in the first place, that the sacred writers declare the *heart* of man to be evil in itself, or, in other words,

to be so deeply infected with an evil principle, as *naturally* to produce the fruit of *sin*. Soon after the prophet Jeremiah had described the "sin of Judah," as "written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond," he was led to point out the true source of the transgressions which he thus lamented; and that source was to be found, not in the peculiar circumstances of that favoured people, but in the *nature* of the whole species to which they belonged. "*The heart*," says the prophet, "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked (or, as in the Hebrew, desperately *diseased*[9]); who can know it?" xvii. 1, 9. "Yea, also," says Solomon, in perfect accordance with the testimony of Jeremiah, "the *heart* of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead:" Eccles. ix. 3.

When David prayed God to create in him "a *clean heart;*" when he cried out, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow"—he was sensible, not only of his actual transgressions, but of the natural corruption from which they spring. "Behold," said he, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me!" Psalm li. 5, 7, &c. Nor can it be denied, that this natural corruption of our inward part was indirectly adverted to by our Saviour himself, when he promulgated the doctrine, that a man is defiled, not by that which "goeth into the mouth;" but by that which "cometh out of the mouth;" because "*out of the heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:" Matt. xv. 11, 19.

The struggles of our evil nature, which continue to be felt even after we have been awakened to a sense of divine truth, are described by the apostle Paul in the language of painful experience: "I find then *a law*, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the

[9] אנוש. *Vide* Job xxxiv. 6; Jer. xxx. 12, 15; and *Taylor's Concord. in voc.*

inward man; but I *see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.* O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii. 21—24. Soon afterwards, he describes the disposition of man to evil as the "*carnal mind*" which "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," (viii. 7;) and the *diseased nature*, in which this disposition dwells, he elsewhere denominates "*the flesh.*" "For the flesh," says he, "lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary, the one to the other:" Gal. v. 17; *compare* v. 19—21.

2. Man, in his natural condition of degradation from original virtue, is, in the second place, often represented by the sacred writers as the child of ignorance, misled by his own false notions of wisdom, and utterly incapable in himself of rightly apprehending divine truth. "The light shineth in darkness," says the apostle John, "and the *darkness comprehended it not*," (John i. 5;) a doctrine which corresponds with the declaration of Paul, that "the *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned:" 1 Cor. ii. 14. On the other hand, although we may construct many plausible systems of morality, gratifying to our pride, yet the "*wisdom of this world*" is "foolishness with God:" 1 Cor. iii. 18—20. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death:" Prov. xiv. 12. In short, unregenerate men are "darkness:" they are sitting "in darkness, and in the shadow of death:" (Luke i. 79;) they are under the "power of darkness:" Col. i. 13. "The rulers of the darkness of this world" Eph. vi. 12) are their governors. Their king is the "prince of the power of the air;" (Eph. ii. 2;) and the *god of this world* has "blinded" their eyes, "lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them:" 2 Cor. iv. 4.

3. Being thus prone to evil, and destitute of a right apprehension of divine things, mankind in their fallen

nature are "dead in trespasses and sins;" (Eph. ii. 1;) they are universally sinners. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us:" 1 John i. 8. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God:" Rom. iii. 23. "God made man upright," says Solomon, "but they have sought out many inventions:" Eccles. vii. 29. And if we would understood the moral character of these inventions, we may consult the apostle Paul, who thus describes, in glowing and comprehensive language, "*the whole world*," which *lieth in wickedness:*" 1 John v. 19. "What, then, are we (the Jews) better than they (the Gentiles)? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin, as it is written: There is none righteous, NO NOT ONE; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God: they are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, NO NOT ONE: their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongues they have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and ALL THE WORLD may become GUILTY BEFORE GOD:" Rom. iii. 9—19.

The doctrine of Scripture respecting the wickedness of mankind is powerfully confirmed by the records contained in it of their history—a history which affords astonishing evidences of a strong, determined, natural, *bent* towards moral evil. What was the character of the antediluvians, to whom was communicated the original revelation of the divine will? We read, that God beheld them, and "saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth," and that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart" was "only evil continually:" Gen. vi. 5. With the exception of a single family, the whole of one generation of mankind was destroyed by the deluge; and the earth was

again peopled by a new race, of which the sons of Noah were the progenitors. But the *bias* of human nature was unaltered. The descendants of Noah sunk by degrees into almost universal idolatry and sin. The Canaanitish nations, more especially, were so full of iniquity, that they became the conspicuous subjects of the divine vengeance; and God selected a peculiar people, to whom he had condescended to reveal his will, and to commit the keeping of his divine oracles, to be the instruments of his wrath. That people was favoured above all the nations of the earth by the Supreme Being, and instructed by the frequent miraculous displays of his love and power. Yet, even in *them* we perceive an almost unvarying propensity to rebellion and transgression. "Ah! sinful nation," cried their prophet Isaiah, "a people laden with iniquity; a seed of evil doers; children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord; they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger; they are gone away backward." ..... "From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment:" Isaiah i. 4—6. Thus degraded and corrupted, the Israelites were themselves chastised by severe temporal calamities, and were at length carried captive into the land of their enemies. At an appointed period, however, a certain proportion of them were permitted to return into the country of their fathers, and to rebuild their city and temple, under the renewed and especial manifestations of divine love. Yet a depraved nature soon again displayed itself in this favoured race. Although they abstained from idolatry, it is evident, from various passages in the New Testament, that they became exceedingly vicious, and at length they consummated their national criminality by crucifying their Messiah.

That modern history affords abundant lessons to the same effect, and that the knowledge which we have of the lasciviousness, pride, covetousness, and cruelty, still so prevalent in the world—not to mention the secret "plague" of our own hearts—amply confirms

these lessons, will scarcely be denied by any person who reflects on the subject with calmness; who takes a just view, on the one hand, of the requisitions of the divine law, and, on the other, of the innumerable iniquities by which it is infringed.

True indeed it is, that, with the evil abounding in the world, there is still to be found, in almost every class of mankind, a considerable mixture of good. Ruined as man is by nature, it may readily be acknowledged, that he retains some few traces of his original excellence; and that, although ever prone to sin, he is not solely, entirely, exclusively, sinful. Such an allowance, however, requires to be carefully guarded; nor can I venture to make it, without observing, *first*, that much of the virtue sometimes apparent in persons who have little serious sense of religion ought probably to be attributed, not to their own diseased and degraded nature, but either to the indirect operation of Christianity, as it is outwardly revealed, or to the secret visitations of a divine influence; for we have surely strong reasons to believe, that such an influence is given to all men, to be their cure; often strives with them from infancy to advanced age; is seldom, perhaps, during the course of their lives, *entirely* withdrawn from them; and, if fully submitted to, would extend and complete that work of righteousness which is now inadequate, partial, and defective. *Secondly*, the real virtue of actions, apparently good, depends upon the motives out of which they spring; and God, who searches the heart, may frequently condemn in us those very works which satisfy our own self-righteousness, and which are warmly applauded by our fellow-creatures. *Thirdly*, although the moral disease inherent in our fallen nature does not display itself in every individual of the species in the same particular form, there is, nevertheless, not a man upon earth in whom it has not been manifested in some form or other; not one who is not guilty of sin; not one who is free from a *natural* propensity to some *besetting* iniquity.

4. In conclusion, therefore, let us notice the *comprehensive* nature of that curse, which is declared in the

Scriptures to be the consequence of sin. While they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham, as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, "Cursed is *every one* that continueth not in *all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them:" Gal. iii. 9, 10; *compare* Deut. xxvii. 26. As these words were applied by Moses to the whole Jewish legal institution, so are they applicable, with an especial degree of force, to *that moral law of God* which formed its most essential feature. Accordingly, we are taught by the apostle James, that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, *is guilty of all:* for he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now," adds the apostle, "if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law;" James ii. 10, 11.

Whatsoever, therefore, may be our besetting iniquity —whatsoever the particular respect in which we have forsaken the path of duty, it is plain that we are justly exposed to divine condemnation both here and hereafter. Since all the world "lieth in wickedness;" all the world is become "*guilty* before God." We have all infringed the law of God: therefore we are all exposed to the curse pronounced on its infringement. We are all "by nature the children of corruption;" therefore we are all "by nature the children of wrath:" Eph. ii. 3. "All have sinned;" therefore (were the voice of the law alone to be heard) "all" must DIE.

I may now proceed to recapitulate the principal truths which have formed the subject of the present Essay. It may be recollected, FIRST, that man was formed, like other animals, out of the dust of the ground, to be a living creature: that he was created liable to mortality: that, after he had sinned, he received the sentence of natural death: "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return:" and further, that as he is himself mortal, so those earthly objects which here occupy his attention, and engage his affections, are all of a transitory nature, and are invariably inscribed with the mark of "vanity of vanities."

SECONDLY, that man is nevertheless the child of eternity, because, being made in the *image of God*, he possesses a never-dying soul; that the existence of a soul as well as a body in man is plainly recognized by the inspired writers; and that there are many clear passages of Holy Writ, from which we learn that after death, and before the resurrection, the souls of the righteous are with Christ in blessedness, and the souls of the wicked reserved, in a condition of suffering, for judgment.

THIRDLY, that man is the child of eternity in another respect also, because, at an appointed time to come, there will be a resurrection from death, both of the just and of the unjust, when even our mortal part will be clothed with immortality: and that the resurrection of the righteous, more especially, will be attended with circumstances unspeakably joyful and glorious, and will constitute the victory of the Messiah over the last enemy—*death*.

FOURTHLY, that man is a moral agent, capable either of righteousness or of sin; the standard of the former being the will or law of a perfectly holy God—and the latter being the infraction of that will or law—that we are made free to choose either good or evil, either life or death—that we are, in every particular of our life and conversation, *responsible* to God, from whom alone we derive all things which we possess, and to whom we must individually, in a future world, render the account of our stewardship; and that, when this account has been given, we shall be judged by the Son of God, and punished or rewarded individually, after a rule of perfect justice and equity, according *to our works*.

FIFTHLY, that the future rewards and punishments of men are declared by the apostles, and by our Lord himself, to be everlasting; and that, for many plain critical reasons, the term *everlasting*, as it is applied to future punishment, cannot be fairly construed otherwise than in its highest sense. That this conclusion is confirmed by a very plain consideration; namely, that the present life alone is the period of our probation; the world to come being ever represented in Scripture

(conformably with the dictates of natural religion) to be one of fixed and permanent retribution.

SIXTHLY, that Adam and Eve fell from their original righteousness and became sinners—that, in consequence of this mournful change, the whole race of their descendants inherit a sinful nature—that the heart or inward disposition of the natural man is infected with sin, and ever prone to evil—that unregenerate men are in a condition of darkness, alienated from the life of God by the ignorance which is in them, and incapable of understanding Divine Truth by their own wisdom—that they are under the dominion of Satan—that they are dead in trespasses and sins, and universally sinners, as is amply proved by the historical, as well as the didactic parts of Scripture—and finally, that, being sinners, they are all guilty before God, and justly liable to the CURSE OF THE LAW.

What, then, are the practical conclusions to which these premises are calculated to conduct the awakened sinner? He must surely be convinced, that, if he continues under the influence of his fallen nature, misery and destruction are his certain allotment. He beholds his deep moral degradation: he confesses that his enemy has triumphed over him: he knows that he is utterly unable, by any strength or wisdom of his own, to escape from the dominion of Satan, and from the bitter pains of eternal death. Stricken with the sight of his iniquities, he trembles under a sense of the divine displeasure, and in the awful expectation of judgment to come; and he is sensible that he can entertain no hope of his soul's salvation, except in the spontaneous, unrestricted, unmerited, mercy of God. Yet, while an indistinct view of that mercy may cast some gleams of consolation over his path of darkness, he perceives not how it can be reconciled with the divine *justice*: he remembers the corruption and defilement of his own heart, and the perfect holiness of his Creator; and he still shrinks from the all-searching eye, from the pure and penetrating presence of the Judge of all flesh. While such is his mental condition he is prepared to pour forth his sorrows in the language of Job: "If I wash myself in snow-water, and

make myself never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me. (God) is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment; neither is there any DAY'S-MAN betwixt us that might lay his hand upon us both!" Job ix. 30—33. He prays for a clean heart: he hungers and thirsts after righteousness; but he is inwardly persuaded, nevertheless, that he stands in need of some powerful and perfect Mediator, who can bear the weight of his iniquity, and perform for him the work of reconciliation. In the bitterness of his soul he exclaims, *A Saviour, or I die —A Redeemer, or I perish for ever!*

With how much eagerness and delight will he then receive the well-authenticated tidings, that such a Mediator has been appointed—that such a Saviour and Redeemer has been freely bestowed—that now "*mercy* and *truth* have met together; *righteousness* and *peace* have kissed each other"—that God has given "HIS ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON," and that "*whosoever* believeth" in Christ "shall not perish, but have everlasting life!"

ESSAY X.

ON THE SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNT OF JESUS CHRIST.

HAVING considered the lamentable condition of man, in his fallen and unregenerate nature, and having briefly adverted to the fact, which forms the centre and spring of the whole dispensation of the gospel—*that God sent his Son into the world to save sinners*—it is natural for us to press forward, with no slight degree of eagerness, to the examination of those passages of Scripture which unfold to our view the person and nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. Diversified and numerous as those passages are, and relating to a variety of different points, they will, nevertheless, be found very remarkably to harmonize together—to elucidate and confirm one another; and it will now be my endeavour to arrange a *selection* of them, in such a manner, as will, it may be hoped, produce on the mind of the reader a clear and useful impression of the whole subject.

The clue which I propose to follow, in making this attempt, is the *history* of the Son of God, as it is revealed to us in the Bible; for I apprehend that the order of his history is the natural order of the subject before us; and, the more closely we follow the natural order of any subject we may be investigating, the more satisfactorily and explicitly will that subject be opened to our understanding. Now, the revealed history of the Son of God admits of being divided into three principal parts,—his preexistence—his abode

upon earth—and his reign in glory; and, while I hope not to forget the circumstances and results of our Lord's *humanity*, it will be my principal object to adduce, in connexion with each of these successive divisions, the testimonies borne by the sacred writers to the great doctrine of his *deity*.

PART I.

ON CHRIST IN HIS PREEXISTENCE.

When we open the New Testament, and peruse the various statements contained in the four Gospels respecting the qualities and powers, the discourses and actions, of the Founder of our religion, we cannot fail to perceive that he was an extraordinary and wonderful being; and it is with irresistible force that the inquiry presents itself to our minds, Who was he, and what was his nature? The narrations of the four evangelists afford abundant evidence that he was born, lived, and died—that he was endowed with those physical and intellectual properties which we ourselves possess—that his body was a human body, and his mind a human mind; and therefore we cannot with any reason refuse to allow, that he was really and absolutely *man*. But did he possess any other nature *besides* the nature of man? Were his conception and birth the commencement of his being; or did he exist in some higher character and condition than those which appertain to mankind, before his conception and birth took place?

To these inquiries we shall have little difficulty in returning an affirmative answer, when we have calmly reflected on the declarations of the Sacred Volume, that Jesus *proceeded forth* from God—that, in other words, he was the "Lord *from heaven:*" 1 Cor. xv. 47. "I proceeded forth," said our Saviour to the Jews, "and came from God," (or, more literally, I proceeded forth from out of God, and am come;[1]) "neither came I of myself, but he sent me;" John

[1] Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐξῆλθον, καὶ ἥκω.

viii. 42. "No man hath ascended up into heaven, but he that *came down from (or from out of) heaven*,[2] even the Son of man which is in heaven :" John iii. 13. "For I *came down from heaven*, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me :" vi. 38 ; *comp.* 41, 51, &c.

It cannot, with any colour of probability, be pretended, that these expressions were applied by our Lord to his own circumstances, on the mere principle that he was the messenger of God, and was invested (however eminently) with the prophetical office; for no such expressions are ever employed in Scripture to describe the mission either of the prophets or of the apostles. Among the inspired servants of the Lord, an exalted place was unquestionably held by John the Baptist, who was a burning and "a shining light," and "*more than prophet*," and yet the distinction between John and Jesus Christ was this; that John was of the earth, earthly—Jesus Christ from above, from heaven. "He must increase," cried the Baptist, "but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth : *he that cometh from heaven is above all :*" John iii. 30, 31. The expressions in question, therefore, must be interpreted (as far as the nature of the subject will allow) according to their literal and apparent sense—namely, as importing that Jesus Christ, at a certain appointed period, came forth from that immediate presence of God, which the apostle emphatically describes as "the bosom of the Father," (John i. 18,) and from that high and holy place, where, after a peculiar manner, he dwelt in glory, and that he then descended into this lower world.

That this is a just view of the subject is moreover evident, because the Scriptures teach us to estimate the reality of our Lord's descent from heaven by that of his *ascent into heaven*. It is a truth plainly declared in the New Testament, and universally allowed by Christians, that, at the close of his abode upon earth, Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, and went to his

[2] ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβὰς.

Father; and in certain passages of our Lord's discourses, his *descent from heaven*, and his *ascent or return to heaven*, are mentioned as parallel and corresponding circumstances. "This is that bread," said he to the Jews, "which came down from heaven ..... Doth this offend you? What, and if ye shall see the Son of Man *ascend up where he was before?*" John vi. 58—62. Again, to his disciples he said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. *Again, I leave the world and go to the Father:*" John xvi. 28.

If the inquiry be suggested, At what particular period did our Lord thus proceed forth from the Father, and descend from heaven? we may answer, on the authority of the passage last cited, and on that of others of a similar import, *When he came into the world;* and if again the question be asked, When did he come into the world? we may reply, *At his incarnation or birth;* for, to come into the world, and to be born, were, according to the customary phraseology of the Jews, synonymous terms.[3] Such appears to have been the doctrine of the apostle Paul. "When the fulness of the time was come," said he, "God sent forth his Son, made (or born) of a woman:" Gal. iv. 4. It was when Jesus Christ was *born of a woman*, therefore, that God sent forth his Son; and, in a very remarkable passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the *coming* and *incarnation* of the Son of God are mentioned as identical, or at least as coincident. "Wherefore, when he (the Son of God) *cometh into the world*, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but *a body hast thou prepared me:* in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure: then said I, Lo! *I come*, (in the volume

[3] *Vide Lightfoot Hor. Heb.* in John i. 9. So also *Schleusner, Lex. in voc.* κόσμος, No. 4. "Huc etiam pertinet formula ἔρχεσθαι εἰς τὸν κόσμον, h. e. γεννᾶσθαι, *nasci*, John xi. 27. ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενος, *homo factus*. . . . . *Ibid.* vi. 14. ὁ ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον, *quem nasciturum prophetæ prædixerunt*: *Ibid.* ix. 39; xii. 46. Rabbini etiam omnes homines vocant בא עולם."

of the Book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God:" Heb. x. 5—7.

Since, therefore, when Jesus was born—when a body was prepared for him—when he was made incarnate of a woman, and thus came into the world—he proceeded forth from God, and descended from heaven, it follows, that, *before his birth, before his incarnation,* he was with God, and in heaven.

As the doctrine that Jesus Christ preexisted in glory with the Father, is thus plainly to be deduced from the declarations of Scripture, so are there other passages of the Sacred Volume (perfectly accordant with these declarations) from which we may derive much information respecting the *antecedent extent* of his preexistence.

We learn from the Gospel of Luke, that John the Baptist was about six months older than the Son of Mary (i. 26, 36); nevertheless, it is recorded in very explicit terms, that Jesus existed before John, "John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This is he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me, *for he was before me:*"[4] John i. 15, and again verse 30.

[4] John i. 15. Ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος, ἔμπροσθεν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν. Since the adjective πρῶτος is here followed by a genitive case, it is construed, in our common English version, and by the generality of commentators, as having the force of πρότερος. The phrase in which it here occurs, may, however, denote that Jesus Christ was not merely before John, but FIRST *before him; compare* i. 1. Rev. ii. 8. It has been remarked, that the adjective πρῶτος may express either priority in point of time, or superiority in point of dignity. That it has here the former signification we may safely conclude, for two reasons; first, because the apostle John, who makes very frequent use of this adjective, as denoting priority in point of time, never employs it to express superiority in point of dignity, (*vide* i. 42. v. 4. viii. 7; 1 John iv. 19; Rev. ii. 4, &c.;) secondly, because it is here construed with ἦν, "*was,*" a verb which cannot, with any degree of propriety be rendered as denoting the *present tense. So the two Syriac and Arabic versions, Theophylact, Rosenmuller, &c. &c.*

Job lived in days of very remote antiquity, yet he confessed Christ to be the *Living One;* for it is of Christ alone that we can with any reason explain his declaration respecting that Redeemer, whose coming into the world, at the day of resurrection, he so plainly foresaw. "O that my words were now written!" said the afflicted patriarch, "O that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer *liveth,* (or is the *Living One)* [5] and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: [6] and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:" xix. 23—26.

Abraham was born about two thousand years before the incarnation of Christ. Nevertheless Christ was in being before Abraham. "Your father Abraham," said he to the Jews, "rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen

Here it may be remarked, that the preceding clause of the sentence ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν is hardly capable of the received version, "is *preferred* before me;" for ἔμπροσθεν, which properly signifies *coram, e conspectu,* is very usually employed to denote *a precedent date,* but can scarcely be understood as implying *mere supereminence.* I apprehend that the former clause simply declares the existence of Jesus before John; and that the latter confirms this doctrine, by the further declaration, that he was *first* before him. *So Whitby's Paraphrase;* "This is he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is before me; and this I said because he indeed was before me, as being in *the beginning* with God."

[5] חי vivus.

[6] ואחרון על עפר יקום. "Shall stand in the latter day upon the earth." These words may rather be rendered, 'And he, the last, shall stand or rise up over the dust.' So Schultens, 'Eumque novissimum super pulverem staturum.' According to either of these versions, the prophet's words appear to be applicable only to the Son of God, who in the day of final retribution, will again make his appearance in the world, and will also stand over the dust, to *raise the dead to life: vide* John xiv. 3; Acts i. 11; John v. 29; Phil. iii. 20, 21.

Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Before Abraham was*, I AM:"[7] John viii. 56—58.

The Bible opens with the statement, that "*in the beginning* God created the heaven and the earth;" and this also was a time at which Christ existed, and existed with the Father. Such is the doctrine of the apostle John, who denominates Christ *the Word*, and who, in the exordium of his Gospel, (a passage marked by the most obvious allusions to the Mosaic account of the creation) emphatically declares, that "*in the beginning was the Word*," and that "*the Word was with God*:" John i. 1.

That, during the ages which were antecedent to the creation of the world, Christ was with the Father, the partner of his glory, and the object of his love, we learn from the expressions used by our Lord in prayer, shortly before his crucifixion. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee *before the world was*;" and again, "For thou *lovedst me before the foundation of the world*:" John xvii. 5, 24.

When we reflect on these passages in the prayer of Jesus, and on the declaration previously cited from the exordium of the Gospel of John, and when we call to mind that Christ, that eternal lover of our unworthy race, is declared by an apostle to be himself "the Wisdom of God," (1 Cor. i. 24) we can scarcely avoid deducing the inference, that it is our Saviour, who, in the character of Wisdom, is introduced as speaking in the book of Proverbs: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old; I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or

[7] John viii. 58. Πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι, Ἐγώ εἰμι. That these expressions are rightly understood, as proving the doctrine of the existence of Christ before Abraham, is evident, not only from the literal meaning of the words, which is indeed exceedingly plain, but from the immediate context. The remark and inquiry of the Jews related to the period during which Jesus had existed. "*Thou art not yet fifty years old*, and hast thou seen Abraham?" The answer of Jesus therefore must be interpreted as relating to the same subject: "Before Abraham was, I AM."

ever the earth was.....,...When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass on the face of the depth.....when he appointed the foundation of the earth; *then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;* rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth; and *my delights were with the sons of men:*" viii. 22—31. Nor can it be denied, that the probability of the correctness of this application of the passage is materially strengthened by the memorable words with which it closes: "Whoso findeth me, findeth LIFE, and shall obtain favor of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me, love DEATH:" v. 36; *comp.* John iii. 36; viii. 24: xi. 25, 26; xiv. 6: Col. iii. 4: &c.

Finally, the "goings forth" of Christ have been "*from of old, from everlasting.*" Such is the declaration of the Lord, through his prophet Micah, in a passage which Jews as well as Christians have long been accustomed without hesitation to interpret as relating to the Messiah of Israel. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall HE come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, (or more literally) *from ever, from the days of eternity:*"[8] Mic. v. 2; *comp.* Matt. ii. 6; John iii. 42.

Such are some of the principal passages of Scripture on which Christians ground their belief, that their Redeemer preexisted in some higher condition than that which appertains to mortals; and which enable them to trace his preexistence backward, even to the "days of eternity." What then was the nature in which Christ thus preexisted? I venture to reply, on what I deem to be the clear authority of the sacred

[8] מקדם מימי עולם. Both the words here employed (קדם and עולם frequently denote a real eternity: *vide* Deut. xxxiii, 27. Psalm lv. 20; Hab. i. 12; Psalm xc. 2; xciii. 2; ciii. 17, &c. And, in this passage the addition of the one term to the other, goes far to strengthen the notion of eternity, as in the very common expression לעולם ועד.

records, not the nature of men—not that of angels—nor that of any order of creatures, however eminent in the scale of being, but the nature of GOD HIMSELF. The scriptural evidences on which this assertion is grounded are as follow.

I. In the first place, it may be observed, that the doctrine of the Godhead or deity of Christ, is a necessary deduction from that of his eternal preexistence: for, while the being of every creature of God has necessarily commenced at some particular point of time, God alone has existed from eternity. Now, this latter doctrine I conceive to be true: *first*, because the Scriptures, while they make clear mention of the preexistence of Christ *before the creation of all things*, (John i. 1; xvii. 5) afford no hint whatever of the commencement of that preexistence at any definite time: *secondly*, because such is obviously the most natural interpretation of the passage now cited from the prophecies of Micah: *thirdly*, because the Lord Jesus, in the Revelation, expressly says of himself, "I am *Alpha* and Omega, the *first* and the last;" (i. 11;) "I am *Alpha* and Omega, the *beginning* and the ending; the *first* and the last:" Rev. xxii. 13. Let it be observed, that, in close connection with these declarations, there are two other passages of the Revelation, in which the Supreme Being (styled, in one of them, "the Almighty," and in the other, "God,") describes himself in the very same terms: i. 8; xxi. 6, 7. If then, in the passages last alluded to, it is the Son who speaks, the deity of the Son is at once established. If, on the other hand, it is the Father who speaks in them, it is undeniable that these sublime expressions are descriptive of some divine attribute; and, in that case, how can they be reasonably explained otherwise than as signifying *the original, independent, eternal, existence of the Great First Cause*?[9] "Thus saith JEHOVAH,

[9] *See Rosenmuller on* Rev. i. 8. 'Ego *sum ab æterno in æternum. Omnum primus sum, nec unquam finem sum habiturus....*τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω. i. e. *Ante me non fuit alius Deus, et post me non erit ullus.* Est locutio a Rabbinis desumpta, qui dicunt ועד תו מאלף (ab Aleph usque ad Tau). Johannes eam

the king of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of Hosts, I am the FIRST, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God:" Isa. xliv. 6; *comp.* xli. 4; xlviii. 12.

II. In the second place, Jesus Christ preexistent was *in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God.* "Let this mind be in you," says the apostle Paul to the Philippians, "which was also in Christ Jesus, who *being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God,* but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him," &c.: ii. 5—9.[1] In this luminous passage, the apostle has evidently adverted to four successive stages in the history of Jesus Christ, viz.—his original glory; his reduction from that glory; his further humiliation unto the death of the cross; and his final exaltation. Now, it is indisputable that his condition of original glory was enjoyed *before* he made himself of no reputation, or (as the Greek more properly imports) *emptied himself, or made himself void* of that glory; and from the construction of the original (more especially) it is equally clear, that this emptying of himself was *accompanied* by his taking upon him the form of a servant, and by his being made in the likeness of men.[2] Since then, Jesus Christ *assumed* the form of a servant, and *was made in the likeness of men* when he became in-

locutionem aptavit ad alphabeticam Græcam, quia ipse Græcè scribebat.'

[1] The Greek Text is as follows: Τοῦτο γὰρ φρονείσθω ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ· ὃς ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων, οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ· ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε, μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν, γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ· διὸ καὶ ὁ Θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσε, κ. τ. λ.

[2] The original might here be more literally rendered—"He emptied himself—taking the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men."

carnate (for these expressions are wholly inapplicable to any other period of his history), it follows, that *before his incarnation,* he was *in the form of God,* and *thought it not robbery to be equal with God.* Hence we again derive the doctrine of the real divinity of Christ preexistent; for whether we understand the declaration that he was in the form of God, as conveying the notion that he displayed the characteristic attributes of deity; or more simply as importing, that he subsisted in the divine *nature,* (for the word rendered "form," sometimes denotes the *nature* of a thing)[3] —it is in either case a necessary inference, that he was truly God. So also it appears to be impossible that he should not think it robbery to be equal with God, or (as the Greek may rather be rendered) to be *on an equality* with God, on any other principle than that of his actually participating in the Father's Godhead. For, between God and the most exalted of his *creatures* there is surely no equality, no evenness of claim on the

[3] I apprehend that the word μόρφη would be best rendered in this passage, "*nature.*" Schleusner *(in voc.)* explains it as here signifying *ipsa natura et essentia;* a sense which he considers this substantive sometimes to adopt in classical Greek. Thus Plato says of the gods, ἕκαστος αὐτῶν μένει ἀεὶ ἁπλῶς ἐν τῇ αὑτοῦ μορφῇ, unusquisque eorun simpliciter semper manet in propria ipsius natura: *De Rep.* The ancient Greek philosophers taught that the φύσις or οὐσία—the *nature* or *being* of a thing —consisted first of its ὕλη (substance), and secondly of its εἶδος or μόρφη (form), and that the latter was its *end* or *perfection*—τέλος, ἐντελέχεια: *see Aristotel. Natural. Auscult.* lib. iii. sect. 8, ed. Paris, 1629, vol. i. p. 337. *De Anima,* lib. ii. cap. 1, vol. i. p. 630. So again, we read that the Son of God "took the *form* of a servant"—an expression which appears to denote nothing less than that, when he was made flesh, *he actually became a servant;* for his whole human life was devoted to the service of God: and, in a less proper sense, he was also the servant of man, to whose wants he ministered. Those ancient Greek commentators, Theodoret and Theophylact, both interpret μόρφη in this passage as signifying οὐσία, *nature: in loc.*

worship of men and angels; but rather a determined, unalterable, infinite, disparity.[4]

III. Thirdly, Christ in his preexistence was the Son of God. "For this purpose the *Son of God* was *manifested*," says the apostle John, "that he might destroy the works of the devil:" 1 John iii. 8. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him:" iv. 9. "We

[4] In rendering the words οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο, "*thought it not robbery*," the translators of our version have adhered literally to the original Greek; for substantives ending in σμος or γμος are active in their signification. As ἀσπασμὸς means the action of saluting, and ἀκοντισμὸς the action of darting, so ἁρπαγμὸς properly denotes the action of seizing, and is explained by Scapula as equivalent with ἁρπαγή *(In voc.)* So Plutarch *de lib. educ.* (as quoted by Wetstein)—τὸν ἐκ Κρήτης καλούμενον ἁρπαγμὸν, 'That which is called the *seizure* out of Crete.' Many critics, however, both ancient and modern, appear to understand ἁρπαγμὸς as of the same force, in this passage, with ἅρπαγμα—*res rapta*, a *booty seized;* in which case the words of the apostle would convey the notion that "Although Christ was in the form of God, yet he did not regard his equality with the Father, (or his being equally honoured with the Father) in the light of a booty—of a possession violently obtained, and therefore eagerly to be insisted on—but made himself of no reputation, &c." *So Theodoret and Theophylact in loc. Chrysostom De Christi precibus* x. ed. *Ben.* tom. i. 538, *Schleusner, and others.* Now, although I conceive that ἁρπαγμὸς is incapable of a passive meaning, and therefore that the common English version of this passage is clearly the preferable one, yet I would request the reader to observe, that either of these interpretations secures the doctrine of the equality of Christ (as it relates to the divine nature) with the Father. That the passage conveys that doctrine, appears to have been the general and unhesitating opinion of the early fathers, and Greek commentators on the New Testament: *see, for example, Isidorus Pel.* lib. iv. 22. *Cyril. Alex. in Esai*, lib. iv. Orat. 4. *Ed. Lutet.* ii. 661. *Theodoret, Theophylact, Œcumenius, and Damascenus, in loc.*

have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world:" 14. And in his Gospel, the same inspired writer testifies, that when the Word was made flesh, his disciples beheld his glory "as the glory of the *only-begotten of the Father:*" i. 14. From these and other similar passages, it plainly appears, that the Person whom the Father sent into the world, who was then manifested in the flesh, and who (as we have already ascertained) dwelt, before his incarnation, in glory with the Father—was the Son of that Father, the Son of the Most High God. This doctrine is confirmed by the apostle Paul, who, in speaking of God's "dear Son," describes him as the "First-born, or the First-begotten, of the whole creation, (Col. i. 15, *Greek Text;*) and also by some of the ancient Israelitish prophets, who recognized the existence and authority of the same divine Person. "*Kiss the Son,*" cried the inspired David, "lest he be angry, and you perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little:" Psalm ii. 12. "Who hath ascended up into heaven or descended?" said Agur, in his prophecy;" "who hath gathered the winds in his fist? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is HIS SON'S name if thou canst tell?" Prov. xxx. 4.

The title, "Sons of God" is, in a subordinate sense, sometimes applied to the angels, (Job i. 6;) and at other times to the righteous among men, for these are the children of God by adoption, (Hos. i. 10; Rom. viii. 14; 1 John iii. 1, 2;) but Christ is denominated the Son of God in a proper and preeminent sense of the terms; for it is under this very title, that he is distinguished by the apostle from the angels themselves, and from *all creatures:* Col. i. 13—17: Heb. i. 1—14. He is expressly denominated God's "*own*" Son; (Rom. viii. 3, 32; *comp.* John v. 18;) and this epithet "*own,*" with the yet more emphatic term "*only-begotten,*" affords an obvious indication, that, with regard to our Saviour, the title *Son of God* represents a relation to the Father Almighty absolutely peculiar to Jesus Christ,—a relation to which no other

being besides himself can prefer the slightest claim. Now, although the particular circumstances of that mysterious relation are placed far beyond the reach of human inquiry, yet since it is ever represented by the sacred writers as an *actual* sonship—since Christ is denominated simply "the Son," because God is his Father; and God is denominated simply "the Father," because Christ is his Son—(Luke x. 22: John i. 18; iii. 35: 1 John ii. 24; &c.) it is surely no unsound or unreasonable inference, that Christ as the true and only-begotten Son of the Father, really participates in the *nature of God.*

Now, these observations are confirmed by a fact which we learn from various passages of the New Testament—namely, that the Jews considered our Lord's assertion of his Sonship as equivalent to an assumption of the divine character, and therefore as involving the crime of blasphemy. "The Jews sought the more to kill him," says the evangelist, "because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his *(own)* father;[5] *making himself equal with God:*" (John v. 18;) Again, when Jesus declared himself to be the Son of God, and spoke of his union with the Father, they "took up stones to stone him," saying, "for a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou being a man makest thyself God:" John x. 33. Lastly, it is evident that this alone was the ground on which the rulers of that infatuated people finally adjudged him to be worthy of death. When Jesus was arraigned before their council, the question which they put to him was this: "Art thou then the SON OF GOD?" and when he replied to that question in the affirmative, they cried out, "What need we any farther witness? for we ourselves have heard of his *own mouth:*" Luke xxii. 70, 71. "Ye have heard the blasphemy—what think ye?—And they all condemned him to be guilty of death:" Mark xiv. 64. Soon afterwards they said to Pilate, "we have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the SON OF GOD:" John xix. 7.

[5] πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγε τὸν Θεὸν.

The law to which the Jews thus appealed was obviously that article in the Mosaic code, which made it a capital offence to *blaspheme the name of Jehovah*:[6] and this offence was supposed to be committed by Jesus Christ, when he declared himself to be the Son of God—because, in doing so, he assumed the divine character—*because, he being a man, made himself God.*[7]

IV. Fourthly, Christ preexistent was the *Word*—the *Word of God: see* John i. 1; *comp.* Rev. xix. 13. The true signification of this title, which is never ap-

[6] *Vide* Lev. xxiv. 16. "And he that blasphemed the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death."

[7] When the angel of the Lord appeared to the Virgin Mary, he said to her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the *Son of God.*" Luke i. 35.

When, again, Jesus was replying to the charge of blasphemy preferred against him by the Jews, he said, "Say ye of him whom the *Father hath sanctified and sent into the world*, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the *Son of God?*" John x. 36.

Lastly, when the apostle Paul was discoursing on the subject of our Lord's resurrection, he said, "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath *raised up Jesus again;* as it is also written in the second Psalm: *Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*" Acts xiii. 32, 33.

If it be allowed, on the evidence of these passages, that our Saviour was the *Son of God*, in certain *subordinate* and *secondary* senses, viz. because he was conceived in the Virgin, of the Holy Spirit, because he was sanctified of the Father and sent into the world, and because he was raised the first-born from the dead—such an admission by no means countervails the plain doctrine of Scripture, that he was also the Son of God, in a far more exalted sense—the Son of God in his eternal preexistence—the Son of God in his unchangeable and divine nature. I apprehend, however, that the true doctrine to be derived from these passages is simply this: that by the glorious circumstances of his miraculous conception, of his authoritatve mission, and of his resurrection from the dead, his actual and divine sonship was *displayed* and *demonstrated* in the world: *compare* Rom. i. 4; *see Gill on* Psalm ii: Luke i: John x.

plied in the Scriptures to a merely human prophet, or to any other subordinate agent of Jehovah, but solely to the Lord Jesus Christ, may be collected partly from the records of the Old Testament, and partly from the known theology of the Jews at the time when the apostle wrote.

If we examine those parts of the Old Testament in which mention is made of the word of the Lord, or the word of God, we shall find that the term is one of very emphatic and comprehensive meaning—that it signifies not merely revealed truth, but more particularly the light, life, wisdom, and power, of the Almighty. By his *word*, God created the world, and brought all things into existence; (Gen. i. 3, 6, 9, 11, &c.: Psalm xxxiii. 6; *comp.* Wisd. Sol. ix. 1:) by his *word* he regulated the order of nature; (Psalm cxlvii. 15, 18; cxlviii. 8; *comp.* Eccles. xliii. 26:) by his word he governed, (Num. xx. 24) enlightened, (Psalm cxix. 105) inspired, (1 Kings xii. 22; xiii. 1, 2, 9; 1 Chron. xvii. 3) healed, (Psalm cvii. 20; *comp.* Wisd. Sol. xvi. 12) and spiritually quickened, (Psalm cxix. 50) the children of men: *see also* cv. 19. cxix. 89; cxxxviii. 2; *comp.* Wisd. Sol. xviii. 15. When, therefore, the apostle applied this expression to the Son of God as a *personal title*, he appears in no very ambiguous manner to have conveyed the information, that it was *through the Son* that God constructed and regulated the material creation, inspired the prophets, and communicated to his people both the knowledge and the influence of his truth; or, in other words, that the Son was the mediating Person, through whom the Father acted, both in the formation and in the government of his creatures.

That this is a correct representation of the signification of this remarkable title, appears, in the second place, from the recorded opinions (in reference to the same doctrine) of certain eminent and early Jewish writers. In the Targums or Chaldaic paraphrases of the Old Testament—documents of high value, and, although of a date not precisely determined, yet of great and acknowledged antiquity—"the Word of Jah" (or of Jehovah) generally denotes Jehovah him-

self *in his immediate communications with the people;* and sometimes, in those paraphrases, this title obviously represents a Person, on the one hand distinguished from God, in whose behalf he acts, and on the other invested with the *attributes*, performing the *works*, and designated by the *names*, of deity.[8] Philo, the Jewish Platonic philosopher, who was cotemporary with Jesus Christ and his apostles, but who lived in Egypt, and was probably quite unacquainted with Christianity (a subject to which he never once alludes), has more largely unfolded the same doctrine; and has described the Word of God as the FIRST-BEGOTTEN SON of the

[8] The following examples will be sufficient to elucidate the views of the Targumites respecting the *Word of Jah—that divine person, through whom Jehovah acts.*

In the Jerusalem Targum, Gen. i. 27 is paraphrased as follows: "And the *Word of Jah* created man in his own likeness—in a likeness created he him in the presence of (or *in behalf of*) *Jehovah* (מן קדם יהוה) out of heaven."

The *present Deity*, who is described in Gen. xviii. as conversing with Abraham, is in the same Targum denominated the *Word of Jah;* and Gen. xix. 24, in which verse we read that "*Jehovah* rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire *from Jehovah* out of heaven," is there paraphrased in the following distinct and explicit manner: "And the *Word of Jah* sent down upon them sulphur and fire—מן קדמיי—from the presence (or *in behalf*) of *Jah* out of heaven."

In Gen. xx. 3, we read that "God came to Abimelech in a dream, and said to him," &c. Onkelos the Targumist has here distinguished the Divine Person who came to Abimelech from God who sent him. "And *the Word from the presence of Jah* (says he in his paraphrase of the passage) came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said unto him," &c.

In Hosea i. 7, *Jehovah* says to the prophet, "I will have mercy on the house of Judah and will save them *by Jehovah their God.*" In the Targum of Jonathan, *Jah* is here introduced as the speaker, and says, "I will take pity on the house of Judah, and will save them by the *Word of Jah,* their God: *see also Jon. in* Isa. xlv. 18—25. In these and other similar passages, the expression "Word of Jah' uniformly represents the "Jehovah" of the Hebrew text.

Almighty—the Vicegerent of Jehovah—the Person through whose efficacious mediation all the divine purposes were carried into act.[9] Lastly, in the Zohar,

[9] The passages in the works of Philo, in which he makes mention of the Λόγος or *Word* of God are very numerous. The following extracts may suffice as specimens of them. In explaining the word Bethel, in Gen. xxviii. 17, he says, Τίς ἂν οὖν εἴη, πλὴν ὁ Λόγος ὁ Πρεσβύτερος τῶν γένεσιν εἰληφότων, οὗ καθάπερ οἴακος ἐνειλημμένος, (qu. ἐφειλημμένος) ὁ τῶν ὅλων κυβερνήτης πηδαλιουχεῖ τὰ σύμπαντα· καὶ ὅτε ἐκοσμοπλάστει χρησάμενος ὀργάνῳ τούτῳ πρὸς τὴν ἀνυπαίτιον τῶν ἀποτελουμένων σύστασιν. "Who can this be, but the Word, the Elder of all things that have received birth, of whom, as of a helm, the Director of all things laying hold, *steers* the universe; and whom, when he formed the world, he employed as his instrument in the faultless composition of his finished works:" *De Migrat. Abrah. Ed. Mangeii*, tom. i. p. 437. In his book of Allegories, our author thus comments upon the Hebrew name Bezaleel, which may be interpreted, "God in the shadow:" Σκιὰ Θεοῦ δὲ ὁ Λόγος αὐτοῦ ἔστιν, ᾧ καθάπερ ὀργανῷ προσχρησάμενος ἐκοσμοποίει αὐτη δὲ ἡ σκιὰ καὶ τὸ ὡσανεὶ ἀπεικόνισμα, ἑτέρων ἔστιν ἀρχέτυπον. "The shadow of God is his Word, whom he employed as his instrument when he made the world; this shadow, or, as it were, *express image*, being the *archetype of other things*: lib. iii. *Ed. Mang.* i. 106. In his work, *De Agricultura*, he again writes as follows: Καθάπερ γάρ τινα ποίμνην, γῆν καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ ἄερα καὶ πῦρ, καὶ ὅσα ἐν τούτοις φυτά τε αὖ καὶ ζῶα τὰ μὲν θνητὰ, τὰ δε θεῖα, κ. τ. λ. ὡς ποιμὴν καὶ βασιλεὺς ὁ Θεὸς ἄγει κατὰ δίκην καὶ νόμον, προστήσαμενος τὸν ὀρθὸν αὐτοῦ Λόγον πρωτόγονον Υἱὸν, ὅς τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν τῆς ἱερᾶς ταύτης ἀγέλης οἷά τις μεγάλου βασιλέως ὕπαρχος διαδέξεται. (qu. διαδέχεται). "For God, in the capacity of a shepherd and king, conducts as a flock, under just regulation, the earth, the water, the air, and the fire, and whatever things are in them, vegetable or animal, mortal or immortal; together with the constitution of the heavens, the periods of the sun and moon, and the revolutions and harmonious courses of the stars; and he places over them his *righteous Word*, his *first-begotten Son*, who, like some deputy of a great king is charged with the government of this sacred flock:" tom. i. p. 308.

(a cabalistic commentary on Scripture, the principal part of which was probably composed within two or three centuries after the Christian era, by Simeon Ben Jochaï, and his disciples) the Messiah, in his preexistent condition, is again described as the Word, Son, and Image, of God; as the Creator of the World; as the gracious Schechina, or immediate and glorious Presence of Jehovah; and as being himself Jehovah:[1] *vide Schoettgen de Messiâ*, pp. 911, 912.

Such are the unexceptionable criteria on which has been formed the almost unanimous decision of biblical critics, that, according to the doctrine of the apostle John, Christ preexistent—*the Word*—was the person through whom all the wonderful works of the Father were effected—that he was himself, and in a manner absolutely peculiar to his own case, the truth, wisdom,

[1] The indefatigable Schoettgen is said to have passed many years in the examination of that curious relic of Jewish antiquity—the Zohar. The information which he derived from it, respecting the opinions of its authors on the subject of the divine character of the Messiah, he states as follows: "As far then as relates to the names of the Messiah, he is expressly mentioned in the book of Zohar, under the essential name *Jehovah*, and is also called the Angel of God, the Schechina, the Divine Majesty, the Metatron, Michael the Archangel, the Angel of the Covenant, the Word of God, the Holy, Blessed God." .... Again, "His divinity is proved in the Zohar, because he is described by the essential name of God. He is called the image of God and the splendour of his glory, the Lord of Hosts, the Son of God, the Son of the Highest, the Faithful Shepherd, the Lord over this lower world, the Lord of ministering angels, the Gracious Schechina. The following divine attributes are moreover ascribed to the Messiah;—Eternity, because the decree of predestination is made in him from eternity; and Omnipotence, because he works miracles. Amongst his divine works it is recorded, that the Messiah created the world, destroys the power of Satan, and receives penitents into favour. To these things are to be added the worship that is given to him, and the doctrine that God the Father swears by him," &c. &c. *De Messiâ*, pp. 911, 912. From the close correspondence of these doctrines with those of the New Testament, Schoettgen concludes that Simeon Ben Jochai was a Judaizing Christian; but this notion is not generally adopted. Indeed, it appears to be precluded by the fact that this cabalistic doctor has always enjoyed a high reputation *among the Jews*. Whether, however, he was a Christian or not, he is a powerful commentator on the *meaning* of the apostle John, in the exordium of his Gospel.

and operative power, of God. Now, from these his essential attributes, Jehovah may indeed be distinguished, but can never be separated; nor does it appear to be in any degree probable that such a title, with such a meaning, should be attributed by the apostle to the Son of God, on any other principle than that of his *actual deity*—of his being truly *one* in the divine nature with the Father Almighty. This conclusion is obviously confirmed, in a very striking manner, by the theology of the Targumists, who (as has been already hinted) plainly and very frequently identify the *Word* of Jehovah with *Jehovah himself*.

V. In perfect consistency with the application, to Christ preexistent, of the title Word, it is to *him* that the work of creation itself is, in the New Testament, repeatedly attributed.

The apostle John does not hesitate to assure us, that "All things were made by him," and that "without him was not any thing made that was made:" i. 3.[2]

[2] John i. 3, 10. Πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο· καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἕν, ὃ γέγονεν. The verb ἐγένετο, rendered in our version "were made," might perhaps be translated still more literally, "came into existence." To say that all things came into existence by Christ is however precisely the same, in point of effect, as to say that all things were made by him. That the apostle's doctrine imports nothing less than that *all things were created* by Christ preexistent, is abundantly evident, for the following critical reasons: 1st, Because, in other passages of the New Testament which relate to creation, the same verb (γίνομαι) is employed in the same sense: *see* Heb. xi. 3; James iii. 9; *comp.* Acts xix 26. 2ndly, Because the apostle is here speaking of the *Word*; and it was the well-known doctrine of the Jews, (founded on the Old Testament) that God created all things by his *Word*. 3rdly, Because there is a conspicuous correspondence between the whole of this passage in the Gospel of John, and the Mosaic account of the creation; and, in the Septuagint version of the latter, (the version of the Old Testament, from which this apostle uniformly derived his citations) this very word ἐγένετο is again and again employed to express the *coming into existence* of the creatures of God. When God said, Let there be light—ἐγένετο

Again, he says of Christ, "He was in the world, and THE WORLD WAS MADE BY HIM:" verse 10. The Greek preposition here rendered "by," as it is used in various parts of the New Testament, denotes indifferently either the meditating or the *original* cause of a thing. On a reference, however, to the doctrine of the Jews respecting the Word of God, (the title applied to our Lord in the preceding part of this passage), I am inclined to the opinion that Christ preexistent is here described as the person *through* whom the universe was created; in which case the statement here made by the evangelist corresponds precisely with that of another inspired writer on the same subject, "God," says the apostle to the Hebrews, "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, BY WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS:" Heb. i. 2.[3]

φῶς, *there was light, or the light was created.*—When God said, Let there be a firmament—ἐγένετο οὕτως, *it was so, or it was so created,* &c. The same terms are employed on the production of each of the six successive parts of the creation, and *no one part* of the creation was effected without the previous proclamation of the divine word of command—a circumstance which plainly elucidates the apostle's declaration, and that without the Word, ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἕν ὃ γέγονεν,—not *one thing was made that was made.* In the Septuagint version of Gen. ii. 4, ἐγένετο represents the Hebrew נִבְרְאוּ *creatus est.* 4thly, Because the same doctrine is repeated in verse 10—a verse in which no reasonable critic would venture to impose on ἐγένετο any other signification than that of coming into existence, or *being created.* "He was in the world, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο—*and the world was made by him.*"

[3] Heb. i. 2. δι' οὗ καὶ τοὺς αἰῶνας ἐποίησεν. The substantive αἰῶνες is again employed to signify the *worlds* or the *universe* in chap. xii. 3, and elsewhere, by the apostle Paul: *vide* 1 Tim. i. 17; 1 Cor. ii. 7. This application of the word is considered to be a Hebraism; for the Rabbins make a precisely similar use of the corresponding expression, עולמים. God is described by these writers as רבון כל העולמים that is, as *Lord of all the worlds*: *see Gill, Com. in loc.*

But, in whichsoever sense we understand the preposition "by," in John i. 3, 10, the fact thus recorded, that the Son was himself the *Maker* of all things—that he actually wrought out the whole creation of God—affords (according to my apprehension of the subject) a satisfactory and decisive evidence that he was not himself a creature—that, on the contrary, he really participated in the nature of the Father. It is by the visible works of the creation, as the apostle Paul has declared, that "the eternal power and Godhead" of Jehovah are demonstrated to our understanding; (Rom. i. 20.) and nothing, I would submit, can be more improbable in natural theology, or more at variance with revelation, than the notion, that God first created a particular being, and then employed that being as the Creator of the rest of the universe. "I am Jehovah," saith God by his prophet Isaiah, "that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens ALONE, that spreadeth abroad the earth by HIMSELF .....I am Jehovah, and there is none else:" Is. xliv. 24; xlv. 18: *comp.* Gen. i. 1.

In conformity with the tenor of these remarks, the apostle, in addressing the Hebrews, has no sooner spoken of the Son of God, as the person *by* whom the Father made the worlds, than he proceeds to expatiate on his divine character; and presently adduces one of the Psalms, in which the Son is addressed, not merely as the medium, but as the *author*, of the creation. "*But unto the Son*[4] *he saith .....Thou, Lord,*

[4] πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν, κ. τ. λ. Some critics have observed, that πρὸς, in this passage, ought to be rendered *concerning*, and not *unto*—a remark suggested by the use of this preposition in the preceding verse.—Πρὸς μὲν τοὺς ἀγγέλους λέγει, κ. τ. λ. "Unto (or concerning) the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits," &c. It is undeniable, however, that the *proper* force of πρὸς is "*unto*," and it is surely very questionable whether it can ever be otherwise rightly rendered, when it introduces (as in this passage) a *form of address*: (*see a multitude of similar examples in Schmidii Conc. N. T.*) Whether, however, we render πρὸς in Heb. i. 8, *unto*, or *concerning*, the argument of the apostle

in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands:" Psalm cii. 25: Heb. i. 8—10.

And now, in order to complete the present division of my argument, I have only to advert to that sublime passage of the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians, in which the Son of God, the First-born[5] of the universe, is presented to our attention as the Former of the most powerful intelligent creatures, the Creator of the material and immaterial world, the *object* as well as the *medium* or *author* of all things. "God," says this inspired writer, "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, who is the image of the invisible God, the First-born of every creature, (or of the whole creation): for by him were all things

is, in substance precisely the same. As the divine Person, addressed in the passage cited from Psalm cii. is the only person mentioned, or in any, even the slightest, manner alluded to, in that passage, it follows, that, if the passage was written *concerning* the Son, the Son is the person there *addressed.*

[5] πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως.—"The First-born (or First-begotten) of the whole creation." This title affords no support to the unscriptural notion, that the Son of God was himself a *creature;* for there is a marked distinction between τόκος, the derivative of τίκτω *gigno,* and κτίσις, the derivative of κτίζω *creo.* And since πρῶτος or πρῶτον is sometimes followed by a genitive case, and thus assumes the force of πρότερος or πρότερον, (as in John i. 15, 30; xv. 18; 1 Tim. ii. 13;) we may conclude with Casaubon, that πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως is grammatically equivalent to τεχθεὶς πρὸ πάσης κτίσεως, *ante ullam rem creatam genitus—begotten before any thing was made.* While, however, the priority of the Son, in point of time, before all creatures, is plainly expressed in this phrase, it is most probable, that the title πρωτότοκος also includes the idea of lordship and preeminence—a notion which sometimes attaches to the corresponding Hebrew term בכור, *vide* Deut. xxxiii. 17: Job xviii. 13: Isa. xiv. 30: Jer. xxxi. 9: *so Schleusner, after Drusius, Cameron, Whitby, Macknight, and others,* interprets πρωτότοκος as signifying, *princeps, et dominus omnium rerum creatarum.*

created,[6] that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or

[6] Some critics conceive that the creation attributed to the Son of God, in Col. i. 13—17, is the spiritual or *new* creation: and were this the true meaning of the passage, the deity of Christ would still be a necessary inference from the apostle's doctrine. "'Omnia Christus fecit nova," says Grotius (in Eph. iii, 9) "et *divinior* hæc creatio quam prior illa." That it is the original, and not the new creation, which is here attributed to the Son, appears, however, to be certain, for the following reasons: 1st, Because the verb κτίζω *creo*, in the great majority of the passages in which it occurs in the Greek Scriptures, (viz. the Septuagint, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament) denotes an actual, physical, formation. 2ndly, Because all things in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, and especially those angelic beings who are here described as Thrones, Principalities, &c. were the subjects of the *original*, but were not the subjects of the *new* creation: *compare* Eph. i. 20, 21; iii. 10, &c. 3rdly, Because the doctrine, that God physically created all things by his Word, or Son, is elsewhere declared in Scripture, (John i. 3; Heb. i. 2;) and, as has been already stated, formed a leading feature in the theology of the Jews at or near the Christian era. 4thly, Because the titles here given by the apostle to the Son—πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, *the First-begotten of the whole creation*, and εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ, *the Image of God*, were immediately connected with that Jewish theological opinion to which I have now alluded. Thus Philo declares that *the Father first raised up* (ἀνέτειλε) the *First-begotten* (πρωτόγονον); and *that he, being begotten, formed species of beings* (ἐμόρφου εἶδη): *De Confus. Ling.* Ed. *Mang.* tom. i. 414. Again, he denominates the creating Word, *the Image of God*, and says that "*as God is the model of the Image* (τῆς εἰκόνος), *so the Image becomes the model of other things*: *De Alleg.* lib. iii. Ed. *Mang.* tom. i. 106. To these considerations may be added that of the apparently universal judgment of the early fathers, most of whom wrote in Greek, and were of course far better acquainted than we are with the natural and necessary force of the terms of their own language. That these writers were accustomed to interpret this passage as relating to a *physical* creation may be ascertained on a reference to Origen, in *Johan.* tom. ii. cap. 8. Ed. *Ben.* iv. 67. *Athanas. contra Arian.* Orat. iii.

dominions, or principalities, or powers: (*compare* ch. ii. 10: Eph. i. 21; iii. 10; vi. 12: Titus iii. 1:) all things were created *by* him and *for* him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist:" Col. i. 13—17. What calm and reasonable critic—what plain and unsophisticated reader of Scripture—can admit that the apostle wrote these things of the Son of God, and wrote them by inspiration, and at the same time refuse to confess that the Son of God is JEHOVAH?

VI. But, the divine operations of the Word, in his preexistence, were by no means confined to the work of creation. He was also the spiritual quickener and enlightener of mankind; and more particularly the celestial leader and governor of God's peculiar people. Immediately after declaring the doctrine, that by the Word all things were made, the apostle John (in reference, probably, to the same stage in the history of the Son of God—namely, that of his preexistence) proceeds to say, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men;" (John i. 4;) and in his first Epistle he describes this divine Person as "that ETERNAL LIFE, which *was* with the Father, and (afterwards) was manifiested unto us:" 1 John i. 2.

It was Christ who (according to the most probable interpretation of 1 Pet, iii. 18, 19)[7] preached, through

Ed. *Col.* i. 416. *Cyril. Hieros. Cateches.* xi. *de Fil. Unig.* 24. Ed. *Ben.* p. 161. *Chrysostom in Johan.* Hom. v. al. 4. Ed. *Ben.* tom. viii. 37. *Theodoret, Œcum. Theophyl. in loc. &c.*

[7] " Οτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθε..... θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ, ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι. κ. τ. λ. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins.....being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also he went and preached (i. e. simply *preached, comp.* Eph. ii. 17, *vide Macknight in loc.)* unto the spirits in prison (i. e. unto the spirits who are now in prison) which sometime were disobedient ..... in the days of Noë," &c. There is surely nothing in the construction of this difficult passage which renders it necessary for us to interpret it as conveying the singular and *apparently antiscriptural notion, (comp.* Luke xxiii. 43.) that Christ, after his

his prophet Noah, to the sinful antediluvians. It was he whose Spirit, in other ancient prophets, testified beforehand of the sufferings in the flesh, and of the glory that should follow: 1 Pet. i. 11.[8] It was he who as a "spiritual rock" accompanied the Israelites

death, descended into the infernal regions, in order to preach to the spirits of the wicked, reserved in prison unto judgment. I conceive that σὰρξ in this passage signifies his *human nature*, in which our Lord suffereth death, (*comp.* John i. 14)—that πνεῦμα (as in Rom. i, 4; 1 Cor. xv. 45;) denotes his divine nature or power (*vide Schleusner in voc.* note 10) which could not be holden of death, and by which even his mortal body was raised again to life; (*comp.* John x. 18;) and that the apostle is here conveying the doctrine, that in this his divine nature and power, Christ (through the instrumentality of Noë, or by an immediate spiritual influence) preached to the rebellious antediluvians. These rejected his divine teaching, and are therefore now ἐν φυλάκῃ—in prison. Macknight explains the passage on the same principle; except only that he understands πνεύματι as denoting the Holy Spirit—a sense which it can scarcely bear in the present instance, because it is governed by no preposition, and, according to the best readings, is preceded by no article: *see Middleton in Gr. Art.* p. 618; *comp. Pearson on the Creed, and Poole's Syn. in loc.*

[8] 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently.....Searching what or what manner of time the *Spirit of Christ* which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow:" *vide E. Sim. Ger. in Poli Syn.* "Dicit ergo *Spiritus Christi*, ut innueret divinitatem Christi, qui ipse jam olim Spiritu suo prophetas afflavit; simulque diceret Spiritum sanctum a Filio procedere." As "the Spirit of God" uniformly signifies the Spirit which is God's, and which proceeds from God, so we cannot with any reason interpret "the Spirit of Christ" as importing any thing less than the Spirit which was Christ's, and which Christ sent: *see* Matt. iii. 16; 1 Pet. iv. 14, &c. More especially compare Rom. viii. 9, where we read again of πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ, and where the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God are plainly identified.

during their perilous journey, and miraculously supplied all their wants: 1 Cor. x. 4.[9] It was he whom

[9] 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. Καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ βρῶμα πνευματικὸν ἔφαγον· καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πόμα πνευματικὸν ἔπιον· ἔπινον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας· ἡ δὲ πέτρα ἦν ὁ Χριστός. "And they (the Israelites) did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual (or *divine*) rock which followed them: and that rock was Christ." Many commentators conceive the doctrine of the apostle to be simply this—that the Israelites all partook of the manna with which they were miraculously supplied: that they all partook also of the water which was, by especial divine favour, made to gush out of the rock; and that the rock which afforded them this supply, and which accompanied them on their journey, *represented* or *typified* Christ. That the spiritual meat and the spiritual drink, here mentioned, were the manna from the sky and the water from the rock, both of which were afforded them πνευματικῶς, that is, *by a supernatural exertion of the divine power*, may, I think, be freely granted, and appears to be generally allowed by critics. But, that the spiritual Rock which followed, or rather *accompanied*, the Israelites, was *not the outward rock*, I cannot avoid concluding, from two considerations; first, because, though the water was miraculously supplied, and was therefore πνευματικὸν πόμα, the rock from which it came was, as far as we learn from the Mosaic history, an *ordinary* rock, and could not therefore reasonably be denominated πνευματίκη; and secondly, because neither that rock nor the stream proceeding from it accompanied the Israelites on their journey. For, although the Rabbins have constructed a tale of that description, no countenance is given to such a notion in the Old Testament; and the contrary is amply evinced by the fact, that the miracle of bringing water out of a rock was *repeatedly* performed for the benefit of the Israelites, during the course of their journey: *vide* Exod. xvii. 6. Numb. xx. 5—8: *comp.* Numb. xxi. 5, 16; xxxiii. 14. What, then, was the divine or spiritual Rock of which the Israelites drank—from which they received the miraculous supply of all their wants? The apostle answers, "*that Rock was Christ.*" Now, although the verb substantive sometimes denotes only to *represent* or to *typify*, (*vide Schleusner*, *v.* εἰμι, no. 13) there

they tempted in the wilderness to their own destruction: 1 Cor. x. 9.[1] It was he who selected, governed, and possessed, them as his peculiar people: for it is declared, in apparent reference to the Jews, that, when

does not appear to be any solid reason why ἦν should not here be construed in its literal and usual sense of "was." The Divine Being is often metaphorically described as a Rock; (*vide* Deut. xxxii. 4, &c.) and Christ—the Son of God—was the spiritual Rock who led, supported, and protected, the journeying Israelites. Such is the interpretation given of this passage by the great majority of ancient Greek critics and commentators: *see for example, Athanasius de Hum. Nat. Suscept.* Ed. *Colon.* i. 607; *Epiphanius, Hær.* lib. i. tom. iii. Ed. *Petav.* i. 358; *Gregory Nyssen, De adventu Dom.* Ed. *Paris*, 1638, tom. ii. 162; *Chrysostom, Hom.* xi Ed. *Ben.* tom. xii. 397; *Theophylact, Œcumenius, Damascenus, in loc.* The same view of the passage is ably supported by Rosenmüller, *Scholia in loc.*

[1] 1 Cor. x. 9. Μηδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστὸν, καθώς καί τινες αὐτῶν ἐπείρασαν, καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ὄφεων ἀπώλοντο. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted *him* and were destroyed of serpents." It is evident, that the pronoun αὐτὸν is, in the Greek text, understood after the verb ἐπείρασαν, and, therefore, that in an English version of the passage, the pronoun "him" ought to be expressed. A similar construction in Greek is very common; *vide, for example*, verse 6, of this very chapter—εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν, καθὼς κἀκεῖνοι ἐπεθύμησαν; where the pronoun αὐτὰ, or the noun κάκα, must be supplied after the verb ἐπεθύμησαν: *so* Luke xxiv. 39. A precisely parallel passage to 1 Cor. x. 9, will be found in the Septuagint Version of Deut. vi. 16, οὐκ ἐκπειράσεις Κύριον τὸν Θεόν σου ὃν τρόπον ἐξεπειράσατε ἐν τῷ πειρασμῷ. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted *him* in the provocation." For τὸν Χριστὸν in this passage, some authorities read τὸν Κύριον, which does not alter the sense of the passage; for, with the apostle Paul, ὁ Κύριος is a distinguishing and proper name of Christ; but the evidence in favour of the commonly-received reading greatly preponderates: *vide Griesbach. in loc.*

the Son of God came into the world, "he came unto HIS OWN:"[2] John i. 11.

Nor can it with any reason be imagined that such things should be predicated of the Son of God on any other principle than that of his real divinity; for the ancient Israelites lived under a theocracy, and Jehovah alone was their King. It was his *own* province to work miracles for their preservation—to punish them for their iniquities, and to inspire their prophecies.

Here I would remark, that if the reader would form a complete view of this interesting branch of our subject, it is indispensably necessary that he should pursue and digest the history of that mysterious angel of Jehovah, who is so often mentioned in the Old Testament as visiting, protecting, and delivering, the people of God—the divine messenger, who comforted Hagar in the desert; (Gen. xvi. 7—13) who conversed with Abraham on the plains of Mamre; (Gen. xviii. 1) who afterwards, by a call from heaven, arrested his bloody sacrifice; (Gen. xxii. 12) who redeemed Jacob from all evil; (Gen. xlviii. 16) who spake to Moses out of the burning bush; (Exod. iii. 2) who guided the Hebrews in the cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; (Exod. xiv. 19) who withstood the perverse and eager Balaam; (Num. xxii. 22—35)

[2] John i. 10, 11. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto *his own* (τὰ ἴδια) and his own (οἱ ἴδιοι) received him not." Verse 10 may be described as the *mould* upon which verse 11 is formed. Verse 10 declares that Jesus Christ was in the world, and that, although the world was made by him, the world knew him not. In verse 11, this declaration is followed up by the farther but similar statement, that Jesus Christ was manifested in that country which he had chosen for his own especial inheritance —that he came to that people whom he had consecrated as his own possession,—and that *even by them* he was rejected: *vide Rosenmuller in loc.* Grotius, on this passage, observes, "*Docent jurisconsulti, id maxime naturaliter nostrum esse, quod nos ut existeret effecimus.*"

who strengthened Joshua for his combat with the Lord's enemies; (Josh. v. 13) who was sent of God to expel the idolatrous nations from the land of promise; (Exod. xxiii. 23) who pleaded at Bochim with the unfaithful Israelites; (Jud. ii. 1) who gave to Gideon his high commission; (Jud. vi. 11. 12) who promised to Manoah the birth of his son Samson; (Jud. xiii. 8. 9) who was manifested in the visions, and inspired the prophecies, of Amos and Zechariah: Amos vii. 7: Zech. i, ii.

On the various narrations now alluded to, it may, in the first place, be remarked, that such is the close resemblance which they bear one to another, and such the singular and characteristic features under which they unitedly depict the mysterious messenger of the Almighty, that it is scarcely possible not to understand them as all relating to a *single individual.*

In the second place, that this individual was no other than the Son of God, may be reasonably concluded, *first*, from the striking and very exact analogy which subsists between the history of the angel—that representative of the Father, that image of the invisible God, that ever-present and operating protector of God's people—and the account given in the numerous passages already cited from the New Testament, of Jesus Christ preexistent; *secondly*, from the evidence of Mal. iii. 1, in which prophecy (as is allowed by the generality of Christian, and by some Jewish, commentators) the *Messiah* is described as the Messenger or *Angel of the Covenant, comp.* Jud. ii. 1; and *thirdly*, from the unquestionable fact, (as the writings of Philo, of the Targumists, and of Ben Jochaï, show it to be) that this wonder-working angel of Jehovah was the very person whom the ancient Jews (the apostle John doubtless, among the rest) were accustomed to describe as the *Word and Son of God.*[3]

[3] In the Targum of Onkelos, the Angel of Jehovah, as he was manifested to Jacob and to Balaam, appears to be described as the *Word of Jah*: *comp. Onk. on* Gen. xxviii. 20, *with Heb. Text*, Gen. xxxi. 11, 13, *and Onk. on* Numb. xxiii. 3, 4, 16, *with Heb. Text*, Numb. xxii. 35. In the Jerusalem Targum, the same title is given to him in reference to his communication with Hagar

Lastly, if the Person, of whose power and offices these narrations testify, was indeed the Son of God, the doctrine of the deity of Christ preexistent will be found to derive a clear and substantial confirmation from the history of the angel, who constantly assumes the character, and is as constantly designated by the titles, which appertain only to the Supreme Being. Thus, when he was manifested to Hagar in the wilderness, he said to her, "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, &c.....and she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou, God, seest me:" Gen. xvi. 10, 13. When he visited Abraham on the plains of Mamre, he not only revealed the designs of his own providence, but was frequently addressed by Abraham, *as the Supreme Being:* Gen. xviii. When, again, he called aloud to the patriarch out of heaven, he said, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from ME:" Gen. xxii. 12. When he spake to Jacob in a dream, he said, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto ME:" Gen. xxxi. 11—13. When he called to Moses out of the burning bush, he spake in the character of God, and said, "I AM THAT I AM:" Exod. iii.

(Gen. xvi,) Abraham (Gen. xviii. 1,) and Moses. (Exod. iii. 14.) In the Targum of Jonathan on Isaiah lxiii. 7—10, the Word and the Angel are again evidently identified. With respect to Philo, he frequently denominates the Word or Son of God, the *Angel or Archangel;* and much of his doctrine respecting the personality and powerful operations of the Word is evidently derived from the history of the Angel of Jehovah, as it is stated in the Old Testament—a history to which he makes frequent references. For example, after describing (in a passage already cited) the pastoral care exercised by the Word or First-born Son over the "flock" of created things—he confirms his doctrine by a reference to one of the principal passages of Scripture relating to this mysterious Angel: "for," says he, "it is somewhere written, Behold, I am he: I will *send mine Angel before thee to keep thee in the way;*" *vide* Exod. xxiii. 20. *Philo de Agricult.* Ed. *Mang.* vol. i. p. 308. Lastly, with regard to the Zohar, Schoettgen has adduced abundant evidence that the Son, Image, or Word, of God—the divine Messiah of Israel—of whom the author of that book so often speaks, was, in his estimation, no other than the Angel of Jehovah, whose history is recorded in the Old Testament: *De Messia,* pp. 6, 125, 145, 149, 195, 911.

6. 14. When the Father Almighty declared him to be the Person whom he had graciously appointed to drive out the Canaanites from before the children of Israel, God said, "Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions: for MY NAME *is in him;*" (Exod. xxiii. 21;) and in precise accordance with these remarkable expressions, when the angel, on a subsequent occasion, addressed the children of Israel at Bochim, he spake to them as follows: "I made you go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break MY covenant with you:.....but ye have not obeyed MY voice.....Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you," &c. Jud. ii. 1—3. When his appearance to Gideon is mentioned, he is described as the Divine Being looking upon the warrior, and saying, "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent thee?" Jūd. vi. 14. When he displayed his glory to Manoah, the latter concluded that his own death was inevitable, because he had seen *God:* Jud. xiii. 22. And lastly, in the prophecies of Amos, he is again described as *Jehovah,* (ch. vii. 7) and in those of Zechariah, as *Jehovah sent by Jehovah:* ii. 8—13.

VII. The observations which, under the preceding heads, have been offered respecting the Word or Angel of God, through whose mediation all the divine purposes were effected, and who was himself regarded as the Deity *present* with his people, and *operating* for their protection and deliverance, will prepare the reader for a just estimate of a very important fact, that various passages in the Old Testament, which describe Jehovah *in his personal presence, and immediate operations,* are by the writers of the New Testament applied, without any apparent reserve or hesitation, TO THE SON OF GOD. Two examples of such an application may now be given: and as we have already traced the deity of Christ preexistent in the statements of Scripture respecting his *works* and *attributes,* these examples will confirm our whole

argument, by showing that the sacred writers have actually denominated him *God* and *Jehovah*.

In Psalm cii. we find the following striking passage: "When *Jehovah*,[4] shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory: *comp.* John i. 14. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer: *comp.* Matt. viii. 2, 3, 6, 13: 1 John v. 13, 15. This shall be written for *the generation to come*, and the people which shall be created shall praise *Jehovah*: *comp.* Dan. ix. 26. For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did Jehovah behold the earth: to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death: (*comp.* Isa. lxi. 1: Zech. ix. 11: Heb. ii. 15, &c.) to declare the name of Jehovah in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem; *comp.* John i. 18; xvii. 26. When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve Jehovah: *comp.* Isa. xi. 10; xlix. 6: Rom. xv. 8, 9. He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days. I said, *O my God*, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands," &c. 16—25.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, (as has been already mentioned) the latter part of this passage is cited as relating to the Son of God, and cited for the express purpose of proving his superiority in the divine nature over all the angels: *see* Heb. i. 10.

Now, since *Jehovah* is here represented as the Person who should *appear* in Zion—who should in his immediate presence operate for the protection and deliverance of his people—and who should declare the name of Jehovah, even as one *commissioned* declares the name of one *who commissions him*; (*comp.* Gen. xix. 24: Zech. ii. 10—13;) it is no matter of surprise that any ancient Jewish theologian should recognize, in the description thus given by the Psalmist, the character of that Word of Jehovah who

[4] When THE LORD, in our common English Version of the Old Testament, is printed in large letters, it almost uniformly represents the Hebrew JEHOVAH.

acts in behalf of Jehovah, and *is* Jehovah; and accordingly, I observe that it is the Word of Jehovah, of whom the passage is explained by the Chaldaic Paraphrast.[5]

Much less is such an explanation of the passage extraordinary in a *Christian* Jew, who not only must have agreed with his fellow-countrymen in their doctrine respecting the Word, (*comp.* Heb. xi. 3) but who could scarcely fail to trace in this ancient prophecy the delineation of that divine Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who had already appeared in Zion—who had already manifested his mercies to a generation which, at the time when David wrote, was a future one—who had already proclaimed the name of his Father in Jerusalem—who had already lifted up his standard for the gathering together of the people and kingdoms—for the conversion of the Gentile nations to the truth of God.

These remarks may serve to elucidate the views entertained by the writer of the Epistle, when he applied this passage of the Psalms to the Son of God. But, on the presumption that this Epistle, like the rest of the New Testament, was written by inspiration (a point which I cannot now discuss, but which I am persuaded a careful examination of the subject will fully substantiate) we are to remember that this application, whether more or less elucidated, is unquestionably *correct;* and we may therefore adduce this passage in the Psalms, as affording a satisfactory evidence of our proposition, that Christ preexistent was himself *God* or *Jehovah.*

In the sixth chapter of the Prophecies of Isaiah, *Jehovah* is described as actually *appearing* in the temple—as made manifest to the prophet in a vision of glory; and it was then that the prophet heard the voice of Jehovah, saying, "whom shall I send, and who will go for us? .... Go and tell this people, hear ye, indeed, but understand not; and see ye, indeed,

[5] Psalm cii. 16.—"When Jehovah shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." This verse is in the Targum paraphrased as follows:—"Because (or when) the city of Zion shall be built up by the *Word of Jah,* he shall appear in his glory."

but perceive not; make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed:" ver. 9, 10. Here, according to the theology of the Jews, there must have been an appearance of the *Word of Jehovah;* and it is the *Word of Jehovah* who, in the Targum on the passage, is introduced as thus addressing the prophet.[6] Here also, according to the principles of divine truth, as held by the apostles of Jesus Christ, there must have been an appearance of *the Son of God* who is himself the "Word of Jehovah," and whom these early Christians were ever accustomed to regard as the "Image of the invisible God," in whom alone the Father is *made manifest: see* John i. 18; xvii. 6: 1 John iv. 12: 2 Cor. iv. 4: Col. i. 15: Heb. i. 3. Why, then, should it excite in us the least degree of surprise, when we find an evangelist incidentally declaring that the glory which the prophet Isaiah saw, on this memorable occasion, was the glory of *Christ?* After relating that, although Jesus had performed "so many miracles" in the presence of the Jews, "yet they believed not in him," the apostle John accounts for the circumstance by citing this remarkable prophecy respecting the judicial blindness and obduracy of that bewildered people: and adds, "These things said Esaias, when he saw HIS glory, and spake of HIM:" John xii. 37—41.

Such an incidental application to *Jesus Christ*, of a well-known passage of the Old Testament relating to *Jehovah*, is perhaps more really forcible as an evidence of the deity of our Lord than the most deliberate and direct affirmation of that doctrine; for such an application affords a plain indication that the doctrine in question was currently and (if the term be not improper) *familiarly* admitted and understood both by the authors of the New Testament and by those persons, in their own age, for whose use their writings were intended. Nevertheless, the truth, to which the apostle

[6] *See* verse 8. "*I heard the voice of Jehovah, saying,*" is, in the Targum, paraphrased, "*I heard the voice of the Word of Jehovah, saying.*"

has thus incidentally adverted, he has elsewhere deliberately and directly affirmed.

I venture to assert, that there is not to be found in the whole Scriptures a single passage which bears stronger marks of deliberation, decision, and solemn emphasis—not one of which the authority, in point of reading, is more irrefragably determined—not one of which the interpretation is more truly placed beyond the reach of an unsound and infidel criticism—not one in which the highest meaning of the divine name is more plainly indicated by the context—than that memorable passage in which this apostle has promulgated to the church, in all generations, the absolute deity of Christ preexistent. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was GOD: the *same* was in the beginning with God:" John i. 1, 2.

On reviewing the contents of the present dissertation, we are to remember that, in the numerous passages of the New Testament which speak of our Lord's having proceeded from God, and of his having descended from heaven and come into the world, there is a distinct recognition of the fact of his preexistence with God and in heaven—that, from other declarations of Scripture, we learn that Christ was in being before John the Baptist; in the days of Job; before Abraham; in the beginning; before the foundation of the world; and even from the days of eternity—that he thus preexisted, not in the nature of men or of angels, or of any other order of creatures, but in that of the Supreme Being himself, as appears from a variety of reasons—first, because he was from everlasting, and is described in terms which are elsewhere employed to denote the First Great Cause—secondly, because he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God—thirdly, because he was the Only-begotten Son of God, of the same nature with the Father—fourthly, because he was the Word, or mediating Person by whom the Father effected all his purposes, and whose attributes and operations prove him to have possessed that actual deity, which the Jews were ever accustomed to ascribe to him—fifthly,

because to him is expressly and repeatedly attributed the work of the creation—sixthly, because he was the Light and Life of men, the spiritual Lord and Governor of the people of God, the Angel in whom was the name, character, and power, of the Almighty—and lastly, because it is both directly and indirectly declared by the sacred writers, that he was *Jehovah* and *God*.

While, therefore, the preexistent Messiah was plainly distinguished from the Father Almighty, as the Only-begotten Son of that Father—as one mediating is distinguished from one originating, and as one sent is distinguished from one sending—it is abundantly evident from our premises (whether they are considered separately or viewed as a whole) that he actually subsisted in the nature of God—that he truly participated therefore in the unity of the Father's essence. And let it be observed, that, as he subsisted in the nature of God, so he subsisted in that nature only. The whole of the information communicated in Scripture respecting the person and character of the Son of God, in *his preexistence*, points to his deity, and to his deity *alone*. In connexion with those other stages of our Lord's history which are subsequent to the event of his incarnation, the Scriptures frequently promulgate the doctrine of his humanity as well as that of his divinity; and some persons have proceeded so far in error as to consider the statements which have respect to Jesus, as a man, to be subversive of those which have respect to him as God. But, as far as relates to Christ preexistent, there is no room for any mistake of the kind; because the testimonies of Scripture on the subject of his deity, *in connection with his preexistence*, are not only plain and decided, but *simple and unmixed*. The whole substance of those testimonies is, in fact, found concentrated in the doctrine of the apostle, that the Word was in the beginning—that the Word was with God—and that the WORD WAS GOD.

PART II.

ON JESUS CHRIST DURING HIS ABODE ON EARTH.

In one of the preceding Essays, I have adverted to the many ancient prophecies which describe the human descent, birth, life, ministry, violent death, and resurrection, of the Messiah; and also to the actual accomplishment of those predictions, as it is recorded in their respective histories, by the four evangelists. Now, I conceive that no one, who takes a just and comprehensive view of these prophecies on the one hand, and of the Gospel narratives on the other, can refuse to admit the doctrine of the real and proper humanity of Jesus Christ. He who descended from Abraham, from Judah, and from Jesse, and "was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh"—who was born of the virgin Mary, and lay a helpless infant in the manger—who increased in "stature," and in "wisdom," as he advanced in years—who performed all the laborious functions of a minister and a prophet—who thought, and spake, and wept, and was afflicted, and prayed, like ourselves—who, lastly, expired on the cross, and was consigned a corpse to the grave—was unquestionably MAN—a creature of God, endued with a human body and a human soul.

And who was that Person who thus became incarnate, was born, lived, died, and rose again, a *man?* It was *he* who shared the glory of the Father before the world was—the Only-begotten Son of God, who dwelt in his bosom—the Word by whom all things were made, by whom all men were enlightened, and who was himself Jehovah. Since, then, eternity is the very first of the attributes of Deity, since the divine nature is unchangeable, so that he who was God in the beginning is God for ever—it plainly follows that, when the Son or Word of the Father assumed our nature, and was born a child into the

world, he who before had been God *only*, became *God* and *Man*.

As this doctrine is a sound deduction from all the various testimonies of Scripture respecting the pre-existence and the human life of our Saviour, so it more especially distinguishes certain parts of the New Testament, in which the two subjects are immediately connected, and which declare the original divinity, and the incarnation of Christ, in the order of their succession. This description applies in its full force to that sublime passage which forms the exordium of the Gospel of John. For it is after having declared the absolute deity, and described the the wonderful works of Christ preexistent, that the apostle proceeds to say, "And the Word was made (or became) flesh, and dwelt amongst us (and we *beheld* his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth:" i. 14. Formerly, the eternal Word of God, although he was accustomed at times to manifest himself in an angelic form, had for the most part subsisted as an invisible agent. But now he became *flesh*, that is *man*, (for the term *flesh* often denotes *men*, as thinking, acting, responsible agents, *see* Gen. vi. 12: Numb. xvi. 22: Isa. xlix. 26, &c.) and he dwelt among his people, so that they actually *beheld* his person, and were eye-witnesses of his glorious works. That "Eternal life," who had been with the Father, was now *manifested* to the disciples, and in such a manner submitted to their senses, that they saw, heard, and handled him: 1 John i. 1, 2; *comp.* iv. 2.[7]

Thus also the apostle Paul, in immediate connexion with his doctrine, that Christ was "in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God,"

7 "Hereby know we the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." The confession which is thus declared by the apostle to have been a proper and sufficient test of a divinely-authorized faith, virtually embraced the doctrines both of the *deity* and of the *humanity* of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ had *become incarnate*. Before this event, he existed in a higher nature, in which he is the *Son of God*. In the nature which he assumed at his incarnation, he is the *Son of Man*.

declares, that this glorious Person "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:"[8] Phil. ii. 7. And it is evidently on the same principle, that, on another occasion, he makes mention of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," that "though he was rich," yet for our sakes "he *became* poor,"[9] that we "through his poverty might be rich:" 2 Cor. viii. 9.

I take it for granted that it is this apostle who has made a yet more explicit statement on the subject now under consideration, in the Epistle to the Hebrews. After citing several passages of the Old Testament, which relate to the Deity of the Son, in order to prove his superiority over the angels, he proceeds to dwell on the humiliation of Jesus, "who was made a little (or for a short time)[1] lower than the angels *for the suffering of death;*" *(see* ch. ii. 9;) and on this point he reasons as follows: "For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, (that is, the Father) in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect *(or complete as a Saviour)* through sufferings; for both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, &c.... Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, *he also himself likewise took part of the same;* that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage; for verily

[8] *Vide Whitby in loc.* Jesus Christ is described as having been made in the likeness of men, because he took upon him *the same nature and faculties.* Schleusner explains the original of this passage (ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος) as follows: "verus homo factus, vera humana natura et proprietatibus adjunctisque humanis gaudens," *in voc.* Thus Adam is said to beget a son *in his own likeness:* and in Heb. ii. 14—17, Christ is again said to be made *like* unto men, (ὁμοιωθῆναι) *because he participated in the same "flesh and blood," that is, in the same human nature.*

[9] ἐπτώχευσε. *Vide Schleusner in voc. Rosenmuller, Schol. in loc.*

[1] Βραχύ τι, "per breve tempus,"—*Rosenmuller.*

he *took not on him* (the nature) of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham;" ii. 10—16. Here I must pause to observe, that this last verse is probably mistranslated: for the verb rendered "took on him" more probably signifies, "*takes hold of, or puts his hand to, in order to assist.*"[2] It was the cause of men, not of angels, in which the Son of God engaged himself: it was men, and not angels, that he came into the world to *assist*. "Wherefore," concludes the apostle, "in all things it behoved him to be *made like unto his brethren*, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted:" ver. 17, 18. From this passage we learn, *first*, that the purpose of the Father, in the whole Christian dispensation, was to bring many sons unto glory; *secondly*, that the Son of God, whose deity had already been so fully proved by the apostle, was the person whom the Father appointed to be the captain of our salvation, and who himself undertook to assist mankind; *thirdly*, that, in order to accomplish this purpose, and in order to his being a perfect Saviour, it was necessary (in pursuance of the counsels of infinite wisdom) that he should suffer and die; and lastly, that *therefore* he took part of "flesh and blood," or of the human nature, and was made in that nature "like unto his brethren."

Plain and substantial, therefore, are the scriptural grounds on which we build our faith, that, when the Son of God was fore-ordained of the Father to be the Saviour of mankind, and when he undertook that sacred office of mercy, he *existed only in the divine nature;* and that when, in consequence of this covenant of light and life, he reduced himself from his original glory, and took part in flesh and blood, *the nature of God and the nature of man became united in him.* Of the mode of that mysterious union we are as little capable of forming any conception as we are of the mode of that

[2] ἐπιλαμβάνεται. *Vide Schleusner in voc.* and *compare* chap. viii. 9. *So also Newcome, Rosenmuller, &c.*

other union, already considered, by which the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one God. Nevertheless, we are, by the most sacred of ties, bound to believe *the fact* as it is revealed to us; and, believing the fact, we may indeed rejoice with thankfulness in its *practical* consequences.

Now, while as Christians we must ever confess that the union of the divine and human natures in Christ is a perfect union, and thus that we have not two Saviours, one God, and the other man, but one Saviour only, one Mediator of the New Covenant, one Lord Jesus Christ, we ought nevertheless, in reading those Scriptures which testify of *him*, carefully to distinguish the *accidents* of the humanity of Christ from those of his deity. For, as long as this distinction is fairly made, it must always be acknowledged that the scriptural descriptions of Jesus, in his human capacity (numerous and explicit as they are) can never afford any valid contradiction to those declarations of his divine character and attributes which have equally proceeded from inspiration, and which relate to another constituent part of a complete and harmonious system of doctrinal truth.

When, for example, we observe it to be recorded in the Gospels, that Jesus of Nazareth was born a child, grew to the stature of a man, and died a violent death, we immediately perceive that these facts are to be regarded as appertaining only to his humanity. And I apprehend that there exists no sound reason why we should not adopt a similar view of the subject, when we are informed that he was a prophet anointed of God, (Isa. lxi. 1;) that his dependence was ever placed on the aid of his Heavenly Father; that he passed whole nights in prayer; that he was tempted by the great enemy of souls; and that he knew not the period which the Father had appointed for the resurrection and final judgment of mankind: Mark xiii. 32. Since, indeed, the narrative contained in the four Gospels may be regarded as the *history* of our Lord's humanity, it would be no matter of just astonishment, were it found to relate exclusively to that single constituent of his mediatorial character; nor would such

a circumstance have cast any reasonable doubt or suspicion over the truth of other parts of the Sacred Volume, (passages, for instance, in the works of the prophets, and in the apostolic Epistles) which have a more immediate relation to his divine nature.

While, however, this inspired narrative plainly unfolds and establishes the doctrine that Jesus was *man*, it abounds with a variety of evidence, whether more or less direct, that he was also *God*. These evidences I shall now endeavour to state in the order which I deem to be most clear and natural. I. Jesus Christ, during his abode on earth, claimed the divine character. II. He displayed divine attributes and powers. III. He received divine homage. IV. His incarnation, life, and death, were accompanied by some other circumstances which fully harmonize with the doctrine of his deity. V. And, lastly, in connexion with this period of his history, he is described as God or Jehovah.

1. The doctrine of the actual divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ ought surely to be allowed by all consistent believers in Christianity, if, on a careful and impartial examination of the inspired records, they find that, notwithstanding his deep humility, his contempt of the honor of the world, and his acknowledged abhorrence of all impiety, this celestial messenger was accustomed to speak of himself (whether directly or indirectly) as of one to whom belonged the known character and attributes of the Supreme Being. Now, that Jesus thus asserted his claim to divinity, and asserted it with all the ease and simplicity of long and familiar possession, appears from a variety of examples contained in the four Gospels.

It may, in the first place, be observed, that he frequently presented himself to his followers as the personal and proper object of religious faith, and of such faith as was to result in their everlasting salvation. "God so loved the world," said he, "that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that

believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God:" John iii. 16–18. "I am the *resurrection* and the *life*: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die:" xi. 25, 26; *comp.* vi. 40, 47, 54. vii. 38. xvii. 20—22. xx. 31, &c.[3] In these and similar passages a faith is enjoined, totally different *in its nature*, from that which can be rightly demanded by any mere servant or messenger of God. It was, indeed, the duty of those persons to whom the prophets and apostles were sent, to *believe the words* of the prophets and apostles. But those to whom Jesus Christ was sent were required, not merely to believe his words, but to fix their faith upon him as upon its legitimate object—to rely upon him as the Son of God, the Redeemer of men, the resurrection, and the Life—and thus on the avowed principle that "there is no salvation in any other"—that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, *whereby we must be saved*:" Acts iv. 12. And let it be observed, that while our faith in Jesus Christ must necessarily have respect to his mediatorial offices, yet it is required to be of no secondary or subordinate character. It is unto his name equally with the name of the Father and that of the Holy Spirit, that the Christian must be baptized: it is by coming *to him* that we are to find rest unto our souls: and, while the Son is described as reconciling us to the Father, the Father is also represented as *drawing* us to the Son, that from *him* we may receive peace in this world, and eternal happiness in the world to come. When the Jews inquired of Jesus, "what shall we do that we might work the works of God?" he answered and said unto them, "*This* is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent:" John vi. 28, 29. Again, "no man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. *Every man, therefore,*

[3] *Vide Schleusner, Lex. in voc.* πιστέυω, *No.* 3.

that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.....Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on ME hath everlasting life:" verse 44—47.

Now, in thus declaring himself to be *a personal and final object of saving faith*, Jesus Christ appears, indirectly indeed, yet clearly, to have assumed the divine character. For, although the mere servants and ministers of God may justly claim at our hands both a ready credence and a respectful deference, it is utterly inconsistent with the scope and tenor of scriptural truth, that men should be required to place *their reliance for salvation* on any *creature*, however gifted or exalted—on any being but Him who is alone from everlasting, almighty and supreme: "Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength:" Isa. xxvi. 4. "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.....Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is:" Jer. xvii. 5, 7. "KISS THE SON," cried David, "lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in HIM:" Psalm ii. 12.

While our Lord presented himself to the disciples as the proper object of their faith, he also declared in plain terms, that he was *himself* the Saviour of the world. "I came not to judge the world, but to *save the world:*" John xii. 47; *comp.* Luke xix. 10. And, that he is a Saviour in the highest and most comprehensive sense of the expressions, appears from his promise that he would "*give*" unto his followers "*eternal life:*" John x. 27, 28. Now, although our fellow-creatures may sometimes be the instruments of our spiritual deliverance, the Scriptures declare that it is God, and God alone, who actually saves us. "I, even I, am Jehovah," says the Almighty by his prophet, "and besides me there is NO SAVIOUR:" Isa. xliii. 11. "There is no God else beside me: a just God and a SAVIOUR: there is none else beside me. Look unto ME, and be ye SAVED, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there none else:" xlv. 21, 22; *comp.* Tit. i. 3, 4.

2. When John the Baptist preached repentance unto the people, he proclaimed the near approach of the kingdom, or *reign* of heaven; and the king who was to exercise the celestial dominion, thus alluded to, was no other (as appears by the united testimony of prophets and apostles, *see* Isa. ix. 6, 7; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Eph. i. 21, &c. &c.) than the Messiah of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now it is generally allowed by Christians, and is abundantly evident from the whole tenor of the New Testament, that this reign of the Messiah was to consist, not in anything temporal or worldly, but in a moral and spiritual government over the souls of men, for Jesus Christ is "the Shepherd and Bishop of our *souls*:" 1 Pet. ii. 25. He is exalted to be a Prince, and a Saviour, for to give *repentance* to Israel, and *forgiveness of sins*:" Acts v. 31. Since, therefore, according to the dictates of sound reason, as well as of Scripture, this highest species of dominion—a dominion over the spiritual part of man—can be truly exercised *only* by one who partakes in the attributes of the Deity, we cannot be surprised that an absolutely divine authority appears to have been often asserted by Jesus, when his own kingdom—his moral and spiritual lordship over men—was the subject of his conversation. There are two of his parables which are, in this point of view, very instructive and explicit. In the parable of the talents, the person who, under the figure of "the man travelling into a far country," is represented as the sole author of our various endowments, and as the Being to whom, in a day of awful retribution, we shall be called upon to render an account of our use, disuse, or abuse, of these his own gifts, can be no other than Jesus Christ; for it is evidently the same person who, immediately before, is described as the *bridegroom*, (*compare* John iii. 29; Eph. v. 28, 29; Rev. xix. 7;) and, immediately after, as the Son of Man, coming in his glory, as the judge of all flesh. And yet who is He, from whom we receive all our talents, and to whom we are morally responsible for a profitable use of them, but God only? Again, in the parable of the wheat and tares, it is the Son of man (i. e. Christ) who

possesses the field of the world—who sows in it the good seed of righteousness—who regulates and directs all the duties of his servants—who sends forth *his* angels as the messengers of his will—who consigns the wicked to their fiery punishment, and who bestows on the righteous their meed of eternal glory: Matt. xiii. 24—30, 38—42. And of whom can such things be predicated with any degree of truth and exactness, except of the Supreme Being?

The account which, in these parables, our Lord has given of his own regal attributes will be found to derive illustration and confirmation from various other passages of his discourses. Thus, when he spake to the Jews of their Messiah, as of one who not only sprang from the stock of David, but was also the Lord of that most favoured and celebrated of the monarchs of Israel, he appears to have alluded to a doctrine which his hearers were probably unwilling to avow, rather than unable to comprehend—namely, that their long-expected Deliverer, the descendant of David, according to the flesh, was, in his divine nature, that WORD OF JEHOVAH, by whom the church of God, in all ages, is possessed, protected, and governed: Matt. xxii. 41—46.[4]

[4] "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, &c.:" Psalm cx. We are assured by Galatinus, (*de Arcan. Cath. Verit.* lib. iii. 4,) on the authority of a rabbinical writer, that in the Targum of Jonathan (now lost) the words, "Jehovah said unto my Lord," are paraphrased by "*God said to his Word.*" And as it is plain, from our Lord's conversation with the Jews, that Psalm cx. was understood by that people to relate to their Messiah, such a paraphrase is to be regarded as an important *Jewish* testimony to the personality and Messiahship of the Word of God: *compare* John i. 1, 14. The first four verses of this remarkable psalm are evidently addressed by the Father Almighty to his Son, the Messiah. On the other hand, the last three verses are most easily explained, as containing the address of David *to* the Father, *respecting* the Son. When David says to Jehovah (in verse 5,) "*The Lord* at thy *right hand* shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath," he has obviously the same *picture* in his mind, as when he says, "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my *right hand*, until I make thine enemies thy footstool, &c." If this point be acceded to, it may further be remarked, that the title אֲדֹנָי Adonaï, THE LORD, by which David describes the Messiah, in verse 5, is one which *uniformly* represents the

Since all sin is an infraction of the law of God, and is in its nature an offence against the Supreme Being, it is plain that God alone has power to forgive it. When, therefore, Jesus Christ "said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be (i. e. *are*) forgiven thee," he laid a virtual claim, not merely to a royal prerogative, but to a divine attribute. When the scribes, present on the occasion, murmured at this extraordinary usurpation (as they deemed it) of the authority of Jehovah, saying, "Why doth this man speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" Jesus neither receded from this assumption, nor denied the inference, made from it by his hearers, that he spake in the character of Jehovah; on the contrary, he continued to assert his own power "on earth to forgive sins;" and immediately wrought one of the most signal of his miracles, in attestation that his assertion was true: Mark ii. 3—12; *comp.* Luke vii. 48.[5]

Nor was it with any less degree of authority that our Lord altered, or superseded, some of the leading provisions of the Mosaic institution. "It hath been

Deity, and the Deity alone. So all the ancient versions: *see Walton's Polyglott*, and *compare* Psalm xlv. 6, 7.

[5] When Jesus Christ breathed on his disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," he added, "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained:" (John xx. 22, 23.) Matthew appears to be describing the same, or a similar, delegation of authority, when he recites our Lord's words as follows: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven:" Matt. xviii. 18. On an examination of the context in the Gospel of Matthew, the reader will perceive, that the whole passage relates to the internal regulation or discipline of the church. If the sinner should neglect "to hear the church," he was to be punished by exclusion from Gospel-fellowship—he was to be counted "as an heathen man and a publican:" verse 17. If, on the contrary, he should obey the warning voice of his brethren, his transgression (no doubt) was to be forgiven: he was not to be separated from the company of the faithful. Now, in their administration of church-discipline, the apostles acted as inspired men. They judged according to the express dictates of the Holy Spirit; and hence it followed, that whatsoever sins they *thus* remitted or retained on earth were remitted or retained in heaven. The actual remission or retaining of the sin was not in their power, nor placed in any degree under their authority: it was in *heaven; vide Whitby, Gill, Rosenmuller, in loc.*

said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:" Matt. v. 31; *compare* Deut. xxiv. 1. Here was an edict of indulgence, which Moses had promulgated in the name, and by the command of Jehovah; but which, nevertheless, Jesus did not hesitate to supersede in his own name. "But I say unto you,[6] that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery," &c. Again he says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, &c. (Exod. xx. 7) but I say unto you, Swear not at all:" Matt. v. 33, 34. There is perhaps no article in the Mosaic code, on which so frequent a stress is laid, both in the Pentateuch, and in the writings of the Prophets, as that which respected the punctual observance of the Sabbath, as a day of absolute rest. Yet, that our Saviour, in relation to this particular, not only reproved the unauthorized superstition of the Jews, but introduced a material relaxation of the strictness of the *divine law*, is indicated by a variety of passages in the New Testament, and is evidently confirmed by the history of the early Christian church: the express principle on which he thus taught and acted being this—that "the Son of Man" was "Lord, even of the Sabbath-day:" Matt. xii. 8. And who could be Lord of the Sabbath-day, so as to have power to relax and alter its provisions, but that Holy One of Israel, the author of both the law and the gospel, by whom the Sabbath, with all its observances, was instituted and ordained? In immediate connexion with this remarkable assertion of divine authority, our Lord appears to have described *himself* as "one greater than the temple." "But I say unto you, that in this place is *one greater than the temple*:" Matt. xii. 6. Now I conceive that according to the apprehension of the Jews, to whom these words were addressed, no one could be greater than the temple—that temple which was essentially connected with the whole course of their religious ordinances—that temple which was endeared to them by the practice

[6] Ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν.

and prescription of many centuries—but the Being in whose honour it was built, and who was still worshipped within its walls.

It is the Messiah, or king of Israel, who baptizes his people with "the Holy Ghost and with fire;" (Matt. iii. 11) and never did our Lord more clearly indicate his own godhead, than when he spake of himself as the giver of the divine Spirit — as the dispenser of that celestial influence, by which the hard and corrupt heart of man is softened, renovated, and purified. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and *who it is* that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee *living water*.....Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life:" John iv. 10—14. Some commentators imagine, that the *living water* which Jesus thus describes, first, as the gift of God, and afterwards as his own gift, signifies nothing more than *Christian doctrine*. But this interpretation appears to be precluded by the consideration that it is not the outward doctrine, but the inward principle of religion, which springs up within us into everlasting life; nor can we reasonably doubt our Lord's meaning, when we remember the express declaration of the apostle John, that, when on another occasion he employed precisely the same metaphor, he spake of the *Spirit*. "He that believeth on me," exclaimed Jesus on that last and great day of the feast of tabernacles, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." "But this," adds the apostle "spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive:" John vii. 38, 39. It is Jesus, therefore, who bestows that saving influence, which all men must acknowledge to be divine in its nature, proceeding immediately from God himself; and I conceive that he acted and spake in the character, not of a divinely-commissioned prophet, but of *Jehovah himself*, when after his resurrection, he "*breathed on his disciples, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:*" John xx. 22. Nor was his

divine character less plainly asserted, when he spoke of the Spirit as a *Person*, and promised to *send* him "from the Father"—When the Comforter is come, whom *I will send unto you* from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:" John xv. 26; *comp.* xvi. 1—14; Acts ii. 33, &c.

3. When Jesus said to the Jews, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM," we read, that "they took up stones to cast at him;" that is, they proceeded, according to the provisions of the Jewish law, to *punish him as a blasphemer;* and the supposed blasphemy of Jesus obviously consisted in his having here assumed the divine character as his own: John viii. 58, 59; *comp.* x. 33. The powerful expressions which he used on this occasion may, indeed, be reasonably regarded as importing, not only that Christ existed before Abraham, but that he existed before Abraham *in the divine nature;* for such a use of the *present tense* of the verb-substantive, *in connexion with a period which had been passed away for many long ages*, was applicable only to that Being to whom it is elsewhere so applied in Scripture—the eternal Jehovah himself. Thus, in Exod. iii. 14, we read, "And God said unto Moses, *I am* that *I am*;" or, as in the Septuagint version, from which the apostle John usually derived his quotations, "I am He *that is.*"[7] The psalmist, in the same version, adopts a similar phraseology—"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God:"[8] Psalm xc. 2. And so also in the Revelation, it is either the Father or the Son who is introduced as saying, "I AM Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come:" Psalm, i. 8; *compare Sept. Vers.* Psalm xciii. 2; Jer. i. 5.[9]

[7] Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν, [8] σὺ εἶ.

[9] The Greek Ἐγώ εἰμι, as it is thus used, represents the Hebrew אנכי הוא "I—He," as appears from the Septuagint version of Deut. xxxii. 39: Isaiah xli. 4; xliii. 10; xlvi. 4;

4. As Jesus appears to have here spoken in the character of the Eternal One, so, on other occasions, he expressed himself in such a manner as indicated his own *omnipresence*. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven," said he, "but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which *is in heaven*:" John iii. 13. In heaven while on earth, on earth while in heaven, the Saviour of mankind "filleth all in all!" (Eph. i. 23) and in this divine capacity of an ubiquitary Being, he declares himself to be the *ever-present* helper of his dependent followers: "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them, of my Father which is in heaven; for, where two or three are gathered together in my name, *there am I in the midst of them*:" Matt. xviii. 19, 20. Lastly, when he was on the point of his ascension, the words with which he parted from his disciples were these—"*Lo, I am with you always*, even unto the end of the world:" xxviii. 20.

5. Abundant as are the evidences already adduced, that Jesus Christ assumed the divine character, it is impossible for me to do full justice to the present argument without entreating the reader's attention to some other parts of our Lord's discourses, which are, if possible, of still greater importance to it. I allude to those passages, in which he unfolds the doctrine of his *Sonship*, and speaks of his own authority, character, works, and attributes, *in connexion with those of*

xlviii. 12: and in the vernacular Syriac, which we may conclude to have been spoken by our Lord, the expression used would probably be אנא אנא "I—I:" (*vide* Syriac version of the above cited passages) or (as in the Peschito of this passage) אנא אנתי "I—I myself." Such an expression, when used absolutely, and especially when it has reference to past or future ages, is equally indicative of the Deity, as is the Greek phrase Ἐγώ εἰμι. "Before Abraham was, I—He," says Jesus. "Before the day was, I—He," says Jehovah: Isaiah xliii. 13. "I—He, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last," says Jesus: Rev. xxii. 13. "I—He—I the First, I also the Last," says Jehovah: Isaiah xlviii. 12.

his Father. The following selections will be found to correspond with this description.

"All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him," (Matt. xi. 27;) or, as in Luke's Gospel, "No man knoweth who the Son is but the Father; and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him:" x. 22. "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his (own) Father,[1] making himself equal with God. Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, *these also doeth the Son likewise;* for the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, *even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.* For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that *all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father.* He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him."..... "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself:" John v. 17—26. "*As* the Father knoweth me, *even* so know I the Father:" x. 15. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the *Father is in me, and I in him:*" 37, 38. "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me: and he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me:" xii. 44, 45. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in me ..... I am the way, the truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known

[1] πατέρα ἴδιον.

me, ye would have known my Father also, and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him. Philip said unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*, and how, sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I *am in the Father, and the Father in me?* The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.[2] And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that *will I do*, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, *I will do it:*" John xiv. 1—14. "He (the Spirit of Truth) shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. *All things that the Father hath are mine:* therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you:" John xvi. 14, 15.

Even when engaged in supplicating his Father, in behalf of his disciples, Jesus still maintained the same method of indicating his union with the Being whom he addressed: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee....." I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And *all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them*..... Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast

[2] The apostles might be said to do greater works than those of Christ, not because they wrought greater miracles, for this was obviously not the fact; but because they were the first to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, and because they converted far greater multitudes to faith in the Redeemer than were converted during the life and ministry of Jesus. The sphere in which he was pleased to act was Palestine. *Their* sphere of action was the world at large. Whatsoever the apostles effected, however, in the propagation of Christianity, they effected by the power of their Divine Master, who was gone to his Father, and had poured forth upon them the gifts of his Holy Spirit. This is evident from the context.

given me, that they may be one, as *we* are.... Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me, through their word: that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in *us*..... Father, I *will* that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am:" John xvii. 1, 9, 10, 11, 20, 21, 24.

It will be perceived that, in some of the passages now cited from our Lord's discourses, the doctrine is plainly promulgated, that Jesus Christ did nothing "of himself." His works were the Father's works. His words were the Father's words. And this part of the doctrine of Jesus may be explained, either of his mediatorial character in general, in which he was man as well as God, and in which he was bearing the form of a servant, or else of his divine Sonship, in which (be it ever remembered) he is the Begotten of the Father, the Word, emanating from God. It is plainly impossible that the Saviour of mankind, even in his eternal Godhead, should perform any work, except in perfect conformity to the will of the Father; for he is the very "Image of the Invisible God;" (Col. i. 15;) the "Express Image" of the Father's "Person (or substance):"[3] Heb. i. 3.

While, however, these passages of Scripture thus bear testimony either to our Lord's subjection to the will of God, in his capacity of a Mediator, or to his subordination to the Father, in his capacity of a Son, they also appear to declare, in language which cannot easily be misunderstood, his real equality and unity with the Father, in the divine nature. Clear is the light which many of our Lord's expressions now cited throw on the parallelism and reciprocity—on the intimate connexion, and even fellowship—on the harmony and union in the exercise of divine attributes—which subsist between God the Father and that eternal Son of his love, in whom he is made manifest to mankind.

The Father alone knoweth the Son, or who the Son is: the Son alone knoweth the Father, or who the Father is. The omniscient Father has a *perfect* know-

[3] χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως.

ledge of the Son: and the Son knoweth the Father, *even as* the Father knoweth the Son. The Son glorifieth the Father, and the Father glorifieth the Son. All those persons who are in a peculiar sense the Son's, are also the Father's: and all those persons who, in the same sense, belong to the Father, belong also to the Son. Whatsoever things, indeed, are possessed by the Son, are of necessity the Father's, and "ALL THINGS that the Father hath," are the Son's: John xvi. 15.

So intimate is their connection—in so absolute a sense is it true that the Son is *in* the Father, and the Father *in* the Son,—that whosoever believeth in the Son, believeth in the Father; whosoever knoweth the Son, knoweth the Father; whosoever seeth the Son, seeth the Father; to whomsoever the Son is shown, the Father is shown. So *even* is their fellowship in the divine nature, that the unity of mind and counsel, which characterizes the *equal disciples* of the same Lord, is compared to the unity which subsists between *these two*—"That they may be one, as WE are:" John xvii. 11. Nothing, indeed, can be much more striking or more evidently unsuitable to the condition and circumstances of any mere creature, than the familiar use which, in speaking of himself and God the Father Almighty, Our Lord has made of the pronouns, *we*, *us*, *our*. "If a man love me," cried Jesus, "he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and WE will come unto him, and make our abode with him:" John xiv. 23. This is a mode of speech, with which (as it relates to the Deity) nothing, that I know of, can be justly compared, but the phraseology adopted by Jehovah himself in the Old Testament, "Let us make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness:" Gen. i. 26. "Behold, the man is become as one of US, to know good and evil:" Gen. iii. 22.

Lastly, with respect to their joint and equal exercise of the divine attributes, we read that the Son works, as his Father works; that "*whatsoever*" he sees the Father do, he does himself—that, as the Father raises and quickens the dead, "even so" (in the same manner, and by the same power) the Son quickens whom he pleases; (John v. 17—21;)—that the

Father gives the Holy Spirit, and that the Son also bestows the Comforter, and sends him from the Father; (John xv. 26, &c.) that the Father and the Son condescend in union to abide (in a spiritual sense) with their obedient children; (John xiv. 23;)—that the Father receives the prayers of believers, and that these petitions are answered and fulfilled by the Son: "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, *I will do it*:" John xiv. 14. Now, since Jesus Christ thus describes himself as cooperating with the Father, in the equal exercise of the attributes of deity, and since "all judgment" is committed unto him, it is not without substantial reasons that he calls upon all men to honour him "*even as* they honour the Father:" John v. 23. And yet, where is the *mere creature*, however powerful and exalted, who could, without committing an undeniable act of rebellion and blasphemy, thus present himself to mankind as an object of *equal honour* with Jehovah?

In conclusion, we may advert to another of our Lord's declarations, which is more especially worthy of our attention, because his hearers understood and even attempted to *punish* it, as a direct assumption of the character of God. "My sheep," said Jesus, "hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are ONE:" John x. 27—30. No sooner were these words uttered, than the unbelieving Jews, by whom our Saviour was surrounded, "took up stones again to stone him. For a good work," they cried, "we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, MAKEST THYSELF GOD:" John x. 33.

Here, in the first place, Jesus Christ describes himself as exercising some of the most remarkable of the divine attributes—namely, as bestowing the gift of eternal life on his followers, and as preserving them by an invincible and perpetual protection, from all the powers of their enemies. In the second place, he

speaks of the Father, who gave him the sheep, as of a Being, whose gracious designs, and superintending Providence, were *alike* indefeasible. And in the third place, he deduces from his premises this very plain inference, that he and his Father are *one* or *one thing*;[4] that is to say, (as I apprehend) that, in their dispensation of mercy towards their obedient followers, they have the *same* purpose, and that, in carrying that purpose into execution, they exercise the *same* power. Now, if this view of the passage be correct, (and it is surely its natural and obvious interpretation) and if it be also admitted that Jehovah, whose authority alone is supreme and independent, and who is placed at an infinite distance above his creatures, finds in none of them a counseller, or a rival, or a partaker in his characteristic attributes—then, I think, it plainly follows, that he who thus described himself as *one thing* with the Father, in entertaining the hidden purposes and in effecting the sublimest works of Deity, was either justly liable to the charge of blasphemy (an alternative from which every Christian must shrink with horror) or is really with the Father, ONE GOD.

II. I may now proceed to the second branch of the proposed argument, and endeavour to show that our Lord, during his abode on earth, justified his assumption of the divine character by an actual display of divine powers.

1. On various occasions which arose during his life and ministry, Jesus addressed those persons who were in his company, in such a manner as afforded an incontrovertible evidence that he was well acquainted with their secret thoughts. Thus, for example, when the Pharisees privately insinuated that he cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub, "Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation:" Matt. xii. 25. And again, when there arose among his disciples "a reasoning, which of them should be the greatest," Jesus, "*perceiving the thought of their heart*, took a child, and set him by him, and said unto them, Who-

[4] Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἕΝ ἐσμεν.

soever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me, &c." Luke ix. 46—48.

Here the question naturally arises, *how it came to pass* that Jesus Christ was thus acquainted with the hidden thoughts of his fellow-men? If those thoughts were merely revealed to him by the Spirit of God, such a circumstance would prove only that he was a messenger of the Lord, eminently endowed with the prophetic gift. But if, on the other hand, his acquaintance with the secrets of the hearts of other men was intuitive and inherent in himself, the display of such a knowledge was a display of a divine attribute; for the Bible declares, that, while "man looketh on the outward appearance," it is Jehovah who "looketh on the heart;" 1 Sam. xvi. 7—that it is God "*only*" who knows the "hearts of all the children of men:" 1 Kings viii. 39.

Now, that our Lord's acquaintance with the thoughts of his companions was indeed of this latter description, appears to be a fair and even necessary inference from the manner in which the subject is handled by the writers of the New Testament. Not a word is said, in the various narrations which relate to it, of inspiration or revelation or communication of any sort; but the faculty which Jesus thus frequently exercised is uniformly described as that of perception or knowledge. Thus the apostle John declares, that Jesus refrained from committing himself to the Jews, "because he *knew all men*, and needed not that any should testify of man, *for he knew what was in man:*" John ii. 24, 45. On a subsequent occasion, after he had brought to light and answered the secret questionings of his disciples, they said unto him. "Lo, now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb; now we are sure that *thou knowest all things*, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God:"[5] John xvi. 29, 30.

[5] Ἐν τούτῳ πιστεύομεν ὅτι ἀπὸ Θεοῦ ἐξῆλθες. The omniscience displayed by Jesus when he replied to the concealed murmurings of his disciples, was the means of convincing them not merely that he was a prophet, but that he *came forth* from God—

Lastly, it was evidently to our Lord's intuitive and unlimited acquaintance with the heart of man that the apostle Peter appealed, when he cried out to his divine Master, "Lord, thou *knowest all things*, thou knowest that I love thee:" John xxi. 17.

On a fair consideration of these explicit passages, I know not how we can reasonably avoid the conclusion, that Jesus Christ, during his abode on earth, displayed that actual perception and personal knowledge of the secret thoughts of men, which appertains to *omniscience;* and which is therefore unquestionably to be regarded as one of the peculiar attributes of the Supreme Being. Now, this conclusion, deduced from the obvious import of the language of the apostles, is confirmed by the express testimony of the Son of God himself. If we are led to inquire, *how it came to pass* that Jesus Christ was able to reveal the hidden cogitations of his followers, we may find a satisfactory solution of our difficulty, in his own words, recorded in the Book of Revelation: "*I am He which searcheth the reins and the hearts*, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works:" ii. 23. And if we pursue our inquiry a step further, and ask the question, "Who is HE which searcheth the reins and the hearts?" the whole analogy of divine truth and the plain doctrine of Scripture preclude any answer but one—He which searcheth the reins and the hearts is GOD. "I, Jehovah, search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:" Jer. xvii. 10; *comp.* xi. 20; Psalm vii. 9.

2. When we consider the human nature of Jesus Christ, we can say, with the apostle Peter, that he was "a man approved of God by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which *God did by him;* (Acts ii. 22; *comp.* John xi. 41) nor could the subject of his miracles be

ἐξῆλθεν ἀπὸ Θεοῦ—that is to say, that he was the true Messiah, the Word of Jehovah, who had come forth from the immediate presence of the Father, and was now made manifest in the flesh: see John i. 1, 14.

mentioned in a more proper manner, on an occasion when the point under consideration was not the deity of Jesus Christ, but only the truth and divine origin of the religion which he taught. When, however, we remember that Jesus Christ was that essential Word of Jehovah, that First-begotten of the Father, by whom "were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible," it seems impossible for us to deny that he must himself have possessed the power of controling and altering that natural order of things to which he had given birth. Accordingly, our Lord, in a passage already cited, while he bears testimony to the doctrine, that, without the Father he can do nothing, plainly asserts his *own* authority over nature — his *own* power to work miracles, *as the Father works them :* John v. 19—21. On the whole, therefore, we may conclude that when Jesus Christ performed all his wonderful works,— when he *gave* sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, strength to the withered, limbs to the maimed, and life to the dead—he displayed the proofs, not merely of the reality of his commission, and of the truth of his religion, but of his actual Sonship—of his union and cooperation, in the nature of God, with the author and governor of all things.

In order to try the correctness of this conclusion, let us compare the miracles of Jesus Christ with those of the ancient prophets and patriarchs, many of whom may be said (in a loose and general sense of the term) to have *wrought* miracles, because they were the appointed instruments of their occurrence, and because they were sometimes permitted, through the efficacious operation of faith and prayer, actually to excite these extraordinary interpositions of divine wisdom and power. But, from the history of the miracles of Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha, it is easy to learn that the Lord alone performed the wonders of which the prophet gave the signals. Thus, when Moses, full of faith in the God of Israel, stretched forth his hand over the Red Sea, "*the Lord caused the sea to go back :*" Exod. xiv. 21. Thus also the sun stood still in its course over the valley

of Ajalon, because "*the Lord hearkened unto the voice*" *of Joshua:* Josh. x. 14. And thus, lastly, Elijah and Elisha became instrumental in raising the dead to life, *after the exercise of fervent supplication:* 1 Kings xvii. 21; 2 Kings iv. 33.

On the contrary, the *mode* in which Jesus performed his miracles, was almost universally such as indicated his *own* divine power: *He spake, and it was done: he commanded, and it stood fast.* "And behold, there came a leper, and worshipped him, saying, *Lord, if thou* WILT, *thou* CANST *make me clean.* And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I WILL, *be thou clean.* And immediately his leprosy was cleansed:" Matt. viii. 2, 3. Similar examples are numerous. Thus, when the people of Nain were carrying the widow's dead son on his bier out of their city, Jesus said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise; and he that was dead sat up, and began to speak:" Luke vii. 14, 15. Again, when the two blind men acknowledged him to be the Messiah, and besought his mercy, he said unto them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith, *be it unto you.* And their eyes were opened:" Matt. ix. 28—30. These and other similar narrations contain a strong internal evidence that the miraculous changes thus suddenly produced on the objects before him originated in the will, and were effected by the power, of Jesus. On other occasions, the word of Jesus produced a similar instantaneous effect on persons who were not in his presence. Great, indeed, was the faith in the *divine* power of Jesus, which was displayed by the Roman centurion, who thus addressed him: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way, *and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.* And his servant was healed in the self-same hour:" Matt. viii. 5—13: *compare* John iv. 43—54. How complete is the accordance of the circumstances thus related with the words of the

Psalmist, sung in praise of JEHOVAH,—"He *sent his word*, and healed them," (Psalm cvii. 20) and with the declaration of God himself, through his prophet Isaiah: "My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which *I please*, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it:" Psalm lv. 11. Lastly, let us observe the power which the Son of God possessed over the very elements of nature. "And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him: and behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and *rebuked the winds and the sea*, and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man (or, as in the Greek, what manner of person) [6] is this, *that even the winds and the sea obey him!*" Matt. viii. 23—27: *comp.* xiv. 32:[7] *comp.* Psalm cxlviii. 8.

In the several instances now adverted to, there are to be observed very evident indications of the spontaneous exertion of a divine power,—indications which are rendered the more striking by the comparison already instituted between the miracles of Christ and those of the ancient patriarchs and prophets. In order, however, to complete our view of the present

[6] ποταπὸς.

[7] We read in the Gospel of Mark, that, when Jesus was at Nazareth, dishonoured and rejected by his own countrymen, "he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hand upon a few sick folk, and healed them:" vi. 5—οὐκ ἠδύνατο ἐκεῖ οὐδεμίαν δύναμιν ποιῆσαι. From this passage we learn, not that Jesus was at any time destitute of an inherent power to work miracles, but only that he was deprived of the opportunity of working them. Since, in pursuance of the order of the divine counsels, faith in Christ was an *indispensable condition* in those on whose behalf the miracles of Jesus were wrought, it followed that, where there was no faith, there could be no miracle. Thus, when Jehovah was about to destroy the city of Sodom (which he had decreed not to destroy while Lot was in it), he commanded

subject, it is necessary for us to take some notice of the miracles of the apostles. These servants of Christ were endued with supernatural qualifications of a very exalted kind; and the miraculous effects which they were the means of producing appear to have been sometimes consequent upon their authoritative command. Yet was that command issued, not in their own name, but in the name of Jesus; and it is distinctly inculcated in the Holy Scriptures, that, although these gifted persons were the *instruments*, through whom were displayed many mighty signs and wonders, yet they were only the instruments. It was their Lord and Master—it was Jesus Christ himself—it was the Son as well as the Father—by whose power those signs and wonders were actually effected. "So, then, after *the Lord* had spoken unto them," says the evangelist, "he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God: and they went forth and preached every where, *the Lord* working with them, and confirming the word with signs following:" Mark xvi. 19, 20.[8] Thus, after the sudden cure of the lame man in the temple, when the question was addressed to the apostles Peter and John, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost, and answered, "Be it known unto you all, and to all

Lot to flee to Zoar, and said, "Haste thee, escape thither: for I CANNOT do any thing till thou be come thither:" Gen. xix. 22. Rosenmuller's observations on Mark vi. 5, are very much to the point: 'Causa vero, cur Jesus miracula Nazarethæ patrare non posset, hæc erat, quod Nazarethani præjudiciis occupati Christo ægrotos non offerebant nec opem ejus implorabant. Ergo nec *potentiæ* sed *animus*, sed *occasio* faciendi miracula ei deerat:" *Schol. in loc. See Whitby in loc.*

[8] Our Lord bears an unequivocal testimony to his divinity, in his own words, addressed to the seventy disciples; "Behold, I GIVE UNTO YOU POWER to tread on serpents and scorpions, and *over all* the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you:" Luke x. 19. So, also, when he sent out the twelve apostles, "HE gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease:" Matt. x. 1.

the people of Israel, that *by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even *by him* doth this man stand here before you whole:" Acts iv. 7. 10. And what were the words of the same apostle, when he was the means of miraculously healing the palsied Eneas, who had been confined to his bed for eight years? "Eneas, JESUS CHRIST MAKETH THEE WHOLE:" Acts ix. 34: *comp.* xiv. 3: Rom. xv. 19.

It was the Son of God, therefore, who bestowed sudden health and strength on the withered Eneas—who caused the lame man in the temple to leap for joy—who wrought all the miracles of his servants—who wrought his own miracles. And since this power of actually effecting miracles is equivalent, in various instances, to the power of *creating*—since it is frequently described in the New Testament as one of the attributes of God—we may, I believe, depend on the safety of our conclusion, that when Jesus Christ (in concert and cooperation with the Father) performed all these wonderful works, he displayed that authority over nature, and that power of controling its order, which are characteristic only of *Jehovah.*

As these observations apply to the miracles of Jesus Christ in general, so do they bear with an especial degree of force and precision on the most remarkable of them all—*his own resurrection from the dead.* That God raised Christ from the dead, is a fact frequently stated in the New Testament, and one which affords a conspicuous evidence of divine love and power. When, however, it is considered, that between the Father and the Son there subsists a perfect unity of counsel and of action; that "what things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise"—it will be allowed that Scripture is still in harmony with Scripture, when, on the one hand, it declares that Christ was raised by the power of the Father, and, on the other hand, that he rose *by his own power.* We have already found occasion to observe, that our Lord claimed a power of raising the dead, equal to that which was possessed by his Father: John v. 21. Now, that this power extended to the

quickening again of his own mortal body, he expressly asserted, on a subsequent occasion, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that *I might take it again.* No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and *I have power to take it again*:—this commandment have I received of my Father:" John x. 17, 18. And further, that Jesus Christ actually brought this power into exercise, and so raised himself from the dead, it is impossible for those to doubt, who believe that all his words were true, and that what he promised to do, *he did.* "Destroy this temple," said he to the Jews, "and in three days *I will raise it up.*" Then said the Jews, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days!" But, adds the apostle, "*he spake of the temple of his body:*" John ii. 19—21. This saying of our Lord's was notorious, even among his enemies; and we read, that "when he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them, *and they believed the Scripture, and the words which Jesus had said:*" verse 22.

Now, what were the circumstances under which the Son of God wrought this stupendous miracle? They were these: that he had given up the ghost—that he was lying a lifeless corpse in the sepulchre—that his human agency was suspended in death. Since, therefore, this wonderful work cannot possibly be attributed to the faculties of his *humanity*—since reason and revelation alike declare that it was a *divine* work—I cannot but conclude, that, when the Messiah of Israel burst asunder those bonds of death, wherewith it was "not possible that he should be holden;" (Acts ii. 24)—even he quickened again that prepared body in which he had been born, conversed, and died;—and when he presented himself alive to his followers—he displayed a conspicuous proof of his eternal Sonship, of his actual and unchanging deity.

III. *Jesus Christ, during his abode on earth, received the homage which belongs only to the Supreme Being.*

Our Lord's frequent, though sometimes indirect,

assertions of a claim to the divine character, procured for him, from the blinded Pharisees, no other return than the accusation of blasphemy; and the wonderful works, by which those assertions were substantiated, they impiously attributed to the prince of the devils: but, among those persons who believed in his name, the words and actions of Jesus were met by a corresponding disposition and conduct. Their Lord and Master was the object of their *worship*.

The examples *of worship* addressed to Jesus must be familiar to every reader of the New Testament. He was worshipped by the magi,—by the leper,—by the ruler of the synagogue,—by the Canaanitish woman,—by the man who had been born blind,—and frequently by his own disciples. The act addressed to him by these persons was the prostration of the body on the ground; and so generally was this act understood to be a sign of spiritual adoration addressed to Jehovah, that, in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, the terms which denote the act are also currently employed for the purpose of expressing simply that spiritual adoration.[9]

It is, indeed, probable that the prostration of the body on the ground was occasionally practised among the Jews, as well as among the other inhabitants of the East, as an indication of merely civil homage addressed to their superiors among men. But that the worship of which Jesus Christ was the object was not in general civil in its nature, but religious and spiritual, and such as could be rightly addressed only to the Supreme Being, we have reason to believe, for the following reasons:

In the first place, although the prostration of the body on the ground might be a ceremony sometimes performed by the Jews, as a token of submission to their fellow-creatures, yet it appears to be one of the principles of *Christianity*—a principle indirectly recognized in the New Testament,—that an act which so usually designated the spiritual worship of God could not be rightly addressed either to men or to

[9] Hebrew השתחוה. Greek προσκυνέω.

angels. Thus when Cornelius fell down at the feet of Peter, and worshipped him, that apostle, eminent as he was as a teacher and leader in the early Christian church, instantly refused to receive such a mark of reverence, and for this plain reason, that he was man, and not God. "Stand up," said he to Cornelius, "*I myself also am a man;*" Acts x. 26. Just so, also, when the apostle John, stricken with the glory of the angel who showed him so many wonderful things, "*fell at his feet to worship him,* the angel, as we read in the Revelation, forbade and even resented such conduct, eagerly exclaiming, "See thou do it not; I am thy *fellow-servant,* and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus:—WORSHIP GOD:" Rev. xix. 10.

Now, the act of worship which, when offered to Peter and the angel, thus called forth the earnest inhibition of the one, because of his being *a man,* and of the other, because *of his being a servant of God,* was the very act which so many persons addressed to Jesus Christ; and, in the narrations of this frequently occurring circumstance, the sacred writers have never once offered us the most distant hint that such a mark of adoration, as offered to *him,* was inconsistent with that primary principle of true religion, that God alone is the object of worship. This fact is the more important, because many of the narrations alluded to afford *collateral* indications that the worship thus addressed to Jesus Christ was nothing less than religious adoration.

The first example which claims our attention is that of the wise men who came to Jerusalem, "saying, Where is he that *is born king of the Jews?* for we have seen his star in the east, and are *come to worship him*..... and lo! the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy; and when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and

myrrh:" Matt. ii. 2. 9—11. Respecting this very remarkable circumstance, it may be observed, that these "wise men" came from the east, to worship the child who was *born* king of the Jews, and at a period when a human king was already reigning over Judæa—that Herod himself pretended an intention of uniting with them in their worship, (verse 8)—that the conduct of the Magi, and the profession of the monarch, must, beyond all doubt, have been founded on ancient prophecies—that the prophecies respecting the coming of the Messiah, recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, plainly assert his divinity—that the notion of *deity incarnate* is still prevalent among many of the oriental nations—and that, according to Chalcidius the Platonic philosopher,[1] who has noticed this part of the evangelical history, the rising of the star was understood to be a portent that the Deity had descended. On the whole, then, we are in possession of no inconsiderable reasons for concluding, that the worship offered by the Magi to the child Jesus was a spiritual adoration.[2]

[1] Chalcidius flourished during the third century after Christ. The reader will, I am persuaded, agree with me in regarding his expressions on the present subject as very striking. "Est quoque," says the philosopher in his commentary on Timæus, "alia sanctior et venerabilior historia, quæ perhibet ortu stellæ cujusdam, non morbos mortesque denunciatos, sed descensum Dei venerabilis ad humanæ conversationis rerumque mortalium gratiam; quam stellam cum nocturno itinere inspexissent Chaldæorum profecto sapientes viri et consideratione rerum cœlestium satis exercitati, quæsisse dicuntur recentem ortum Dei, repertaque illa majestate puerili, veneratos esse, et vota Deo tanto convenientia nuncupasse:" *vide Grot. de Verit.* lib. III. 14.

[2] On the highly probable supposition, that the gifts of the wise men were all symbolical, we may, perhaps, accede to the opinion of certain early fathers, that the gold represented the regality of Christ, the myrrh his death and burial, and the frankincense his *divinity*—points in the circumstances and character of the Messiah, which had severally been made the subject of prophecy. Speaking of the Magi, Origen says, φέροντες μὲν δῶρα ἃ (ἵν' οὕτως ὀνομάσω) συνθέτῳ τίνι ἐκ Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπου δυητοῦ προσήνεγκαν σύμβολα μέν, ὡς βασιλεῖ τὸν χρυσὸν, ὡς δὲ τεθνηξομένῳ τὴν σμύρναν, ὡς δὲ Θεῷ τὸν λιβανωτόν. "They

In the instances of worship addressed to our Lord during the course of his ministry, there is to be observed an almost uniform feature, viz. that the act of homage is described as a sign of *religious faith*, directed to Christ as its object. This faith had, in some instances, an obvious respect to his omnipotence. The leper, when worshipping Jesus, cried out, "If thou *wilt*, thou *canst* make me clean:" Matt. viii. 2. "My daughter is even now dead," exclaimed the ruler, when prostrate before his Lord; but come, and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live:" Matt ix. 18; *compare* Matt. xv. 25. Now, that faith in the divine power of Jesus, which such addresses to him plainly indicated, was probably connected with the doctrine of which so many traces are to be found in the writings of the early Jews, that God is manifested to mankind by his *Word* or *Son;* and arose out of the conviction that Jesus was himself this *Son of God.* Accordingly, we find, that the followers of Jesus, on other occasions, after witnessing the miraculous exertions of his divine power, not only worshipped him, but accompanied the act of worship with the confession of their belief in him, as *the Son of God.* When Jesus had interrupted for a time one of the laws of nature, by walking on the surface of the sea, and when he had hushed the winds and waves into a calm, they that were in the ship came and worshipped him,

offered their gifts as symbols, to one who was (if I may so express myself) jointly both God and man. The gold they offered to him as to a king—the myrrh as to a man who was soon to die—the frankincense as to God:" *Contra Cel.* lib. i. sect. 60, Ed. *Ben.* i. p. 375. Irenæus has given a precisely similar explanation of the gifts of the Magi: "Matthæus autem," says he, 'Magos ab oriente venientes ait dixisse, Vidimus stellam ejus in Oriente et venimus adorare eum, deductosque a stella in domum Jacob ad Emmanuel, per ea quæ obtulerunt munera ostendisse, quis erat qui adorabatur; myrrham quidem, quod ipse erat qui pro mortali humano genere moreretur et sepeliretur: aurum vero quoniam Rex, *cujus regni finis non est*; thus vero quoniam *Deus*, qui et *notus in Judæa factus est*, et manifestus eis qui non quærebant eum. Contra Hæres.: lib. III. cap. ix. Ed. *Ben.* p. 184.

"saying, of a truth thou art the *Son of God:*" Matt. xiv. 33. Again, we read, that after he had bestowed sight on the man who was born blind, he found him, and said unto him, "Dost thou believe on the *Son of God?* He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I *believe;* and he worshipped him:" John ix. 35—38.

Even the devils worshipped Jesus, because he was the Son of God; for it is to them that the act must be attributed, when it was performed by the man who was possessed with them, and when they cried out in the agony of their fear, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou *Son of God?* Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Matt. viii. 29: *comp.* Mark v. 7. Lastly, it could surely be no civil homage —it could be nothing short of spiritual adoration— which the whole company of the apostles addressed to their divine Master, after they had witnessed his glorious ascension. "And it came to pass," says the evangelist, "while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven; and they *worshipped him,* and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God:" Luke xxiv. 51—53.

Now that the very writers who have recorded the *reprobation* of the reverential act, when addressed to Peter and the angel, although, in both cases, it was probably a token of mere submission, should have described the worship so often offered to Jesus Christ, *under circumstances plainly indicative of a spiritual homage,* and should never have hinted that it was in any degree objectionable—that Peter, also, should freely and frequently have addressed to Jesus that very act which, when it was offered to himself, he so strenuously resisted, *because he was a man*—appears to be utterly unaccountable, unless we allow that the evangelists and apostles were themselves persuaded of our Lord's divinity, and of his therefore being, *with the Father,* a legitimate object of religious adoration.

But, it is still more remarkable, still more con-

clusively to the point, that the holy Jesus himself, the perfection of whose humility no Christian dares to dispute, should not only have tolerated the divine homage thus offered to him, but should have graciously accepted and richly rewarded it, as an evidence of faith, piety, and obedience. "I will," replied he to the believing and worshipping leper, "be thou clean;" and to the Canaanitish woman, who lay prostrate before him, he said, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." If we admit that all the words and actions of Jesus were lawful and right, I think we must also admit that, in thus receiving and blessing the adoration of which he was himself the object, and which was addressed to him as a sign of religious faith, the lowly Saviour of men has afforded us an indirect, yet irresistible evidence, that he truly participates in the nature and dignity of that Almighty Being, to whom alone he has declared all worship to be due: Matt. iv. 10; *comp.* John v. 23.

In conclusion, and in confirmation of the whole argument, it only remains to be observed, that the incarnate Son of God is declared to be the object of worship,—of spiritual surely and divine worship—not only to men, but to angels. "When he bringeth the first-begotten into the world, (says the apostle to the Hebrews,) he saith, AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM:" Heb. i. 6: *comp. Sept.* Psalm xcvii. 7.[3]

IV. Independently of the three leading and general facts to which we have now adverted, (namely, that Jesus Christ, during his abode on earth, claimed the divine character, exercised the divine attributes, and received divine honours) there are several circumstances recorded in the Gospels, in connexion with our Lord's birth, life, and death, which, although not in all cases amounting to proper evidences of his deity, are strange and unaccountable, on the principle that he was merely man, and perfectly *harmonize* with the doctrine of *God*

[3] The whole subject of the worship addressed to Jesus Christ, during his abode on earth, will be found ably treated in discourses delivered at Oxford, in 1816, 1817, by Edward Nares, D.D. and since published.

manifest in the flesh. Foremost among these circumstances stands the mighty miracle wrought at the very *point of time* when the godhead of Christ became united with humanity—the miracle of his divine conception. What could be more sublime, or more *in accordance* with the doctrine of our Lord's divinity, than such a miracle? What more expressive of the celestial dignity of the child who was about to be born, than the salutation addressed to the virgin by the angel Gabriel? "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called THE SON OF THE HIGHEST: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and OF HIS KINGDOM THERE SHALL BE NO END:" Luke i. 30, 33: *comp.* verses 42, 43. The star, which arose in the east, guided the wise men on their journey, and at length stood still over the place where the young child lay, was a bright and beautiful symbol of *his* glory whom they came to adore. Nor was it a faint indication of the vast event of deity incarnate, which was afforded to the shepherds during their night watches, when "the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them:" when he said unto them, "Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is CHRIST THE LORD;" and when "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good-will towards men:" Luke ii. 8, 14.

Again, in relation to the ministry of Jesus, how plain a designation of his royal and divine authority was the conspicuous fact, that John the Baptist, than whom there had arisen no greater prophet—he who was filled with the Holy Ghost from his very childhood, and came in the spirit and power of Elijah—should be sent for the professed, the single, purpose of preparing the way for Jesus—of opening the door of entrance for his mighty and majestic successor!

And in how striking a manner was the truth of our Lord's divinity confirmed, when the heavens were opened, when the Holy Spirit descended upon him as a dove, and when his Sonship was vocally proclaimed by Jehovah himself! Still more strongly indicative of the same truth was the glorious scene of our Lord's transfiguration, when on the mountain "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light"—when Moses and Elias came to minister to him—and when, from the bright cloud which encompassed them, the voice of God the Father was again heard to break forth—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him:" Matt. xvii. 1—5.

To the same purpose may be mentioned, the irresistible influence which often accompanied the mere personal presence of Jesus—an influence before which the efforts of men and devils shrunk into nothing. When the tumultuous Nazarenes were leading him an easy sacrifice, as it appeared, to the brink of the fatal precipice, they had no power to injure him. *He passed through the midst of them, and "went his way:"* Luke iv. 30. When the well-armed band of his enemies discovered him in the garden of Gethsemane, they dared not approach him; "*they went backward, and fell to the ground:*" John xviii. 6. The evil spirits themselves, who could not but believe and tremble, were often by instant terror constrained to confess his divine authority. Even the stormy winds not only obeyed the voice of Jesus, but subsided into a calm under the simple influence of his presence. No sooner was Jesus entered into the ship, in which his disciples had been tossed on a boisterous sea, than "*the wind ceased:*" Matt. xiv. 32.

Very plainly, in the last place, did nature bear her testimony to the mighty authority of her eternal Sovereign, when, as Jesus hung on the cross, during three mid-day hours, and *at a period when natural eclipse was impossible*, a miraculous darkness covered the whole land; and when, after he had expired on the cross, the earth quaked, the rocks were torn asunder, the veil of the temple was rent in twain

from the top to the bottom, the graves were opened, and the bodies of many saints, who slept, arose. Well might the "centurion, and those that were with him, watching Jesus," when they beheld these wonders, exclaim with trembling, "*Truly this was the Son of God!*" Matt. xxvii. 45—54.

V. In order to complete the argument of the present section, I must, in conclusion, adduce certain well-known passages of Scripture, selected partly from the Old and partly from the New Testament, in which the Lord Jesus Christ, in connexion with his incarnation and abode on earth, is described by the names of GOD or JEHOVAH. These passages will be found to apply, in succession, to his birth, to his life and ministry, to his death, and to his resurrection.

When the apostle John, after declaring that the "Word was God," proceeded to inform his readers, that the "Word was made flesh," he plainly promulgated the doctrine, that the *Deity became incarnate:* John i. 1, 14. Now, this doctrine forms one of the principal and most distinguished features of several of those prophecies in the Old Testament, which describe the coming of that great moral and spiritual deliverer, the Messiah, or anointed Prince of Israel.

Our first example will be found in Isaiah vii. That and the following chapter contain a prophecy which, like many others in the Old Testament, (and especially some in the Psalms,) may be regarded as of a mixed or double interpretation. The major part of it relates to the deliverance of the Jews under king Ahaz, from the threatened invasion of the Samaritans and Syrians, and to the utter destruction of those hostile nations; and these events were to take place, it appears, during the boyhood of one of the prophet's sons, and the infancy of the other; for he and his children are declared to have been "*for signs and for wonders in Israel:*" Isaiah vii. 16; viii. 4, 18. But, while these subordinate particulars claim a large share of the prophet's attention, his mind appears to be principally fixed on a far more exalted subject, and he suddenly breaks forth into a declaration of the future miraculous birth *of the Messiah himself:* "Hear

ye now, O house of David," said the prophet, "it is a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call (or thou shalt call) his name IMMANUEL:" Isa. vii. 14. In explaining this passage as relating to our Lord Jesus Christ, we are fully justified, first, by the wonderful correspondence of the event with the prediction;[4] secondly, by an apparent *allusion to* that prediction in the prophecy delivered by Micah respecting the birth of Christ at Bethlehem;[5] lastly, by the positive declaration of the apostle Matthew, who, after describing the event in question, writes as follows: "Now, all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, GOD WITH US:" Matt. i. 22, 23.

[4] Nothing could be more striking than the *sign* or *miracle* here predicted, namely, that a *virgin* should conceive and bear a Son; and nothing more extraordinary than the exact fulfilment of that prediction, as recorded by the evangelists Matthew and Luke. The Hebrew substantive עלמה has, like our word "virgin," the peculiar meaning of "*virgo intacta.*" Most critics derive this substantive from עלם *condidit*, thence inferring, that עלמה properly signifies "a young woman, who liveth obscure or *concealed* at home, under the care of parents, unmarried:" *vide Taylor's Concordance.* Thus, in Gen. xxiv. 43, the word is used to designate Rebecca, before she married Isaac; and in Exod. ii. 8, it is applied to Miriam, the unmarried sister of the infant Moses: *see also* Cant. vi. 8.

[5] "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until *the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth;* then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel; and he shall stand and feed in the strength of Jehovah," &c. Micah v. 2—4.

Since the names in use among the ancient Hebrews were generally understood to be *characteristic*, it became customary with them, when they were describing the character or circumstances of any person or place, to say that such person or place should be called "*by such or such a name:*" *see* Isa. iv. 3; ix. 6; xix. 18; xxxv. 8; lvi. 7: Jer. vii. 32: Zech. viii. 3: Matt. v. 19, &c. When, therefore, we read that the name of the holy child of the virgin Mary was to be called "*God with us,*" we are to understand, not that this was to be his proper name; for, according to the apostle himself who quotes this prediction, his proper name was to be *Jesus:* (ver. 21;) but, that his nature and condition were to be actually such as the title in question expressed. If, then, this title expressed the nature and condition of Jesus, I know not how we can avoid the conclusion, that he was himself "GOD WITH US"—that he was himself that *present and manifested Deity*, whom the Jews were accustomed to describe as the "*Word of Jehovah,*" and whom the Christians identified with the true Messiah, the founder of their own religion.

This explanation of Isa. vii. 14, is amply confirmed by a corresponding passage, which Bishop Lowth regards as the conclusion of the same general prophecy —a passage which, for the obvious purpose of escaping from the force of its evidence in favour of Christian doctrine, some of the Jews have explained of Hezekiah; but which the analogy of Scripture plainly precludes our interpreting otherwise than as relating to the Messiah of Israel, whose peaceful, universal, and eternal, reign is so often described in similar glowing colours— "For unto us a *child is born:* unto us a *son is given:* and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called (or in other words he shall *be*) *Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, (or the Father of Eternity,) the Prince of Peace.* Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever: Isaiah ix. 6, 7. Here, then, in connexion with

a prediction relating to *the birth of Jesus Christ*, there is a full and manifold declaration of his deity; for it is *Jehovah* who is elsewhere described by the prophet as "wonderful in counsel;" (ch. xxviii. 29;) it is *Jehovah* who can alone be represented either as the Father of Eternity, or as the eternal Father of his people;[6] it is *Jehovah* who blesses his children with peace; (Ps. xxix. 11;) it is *Jehovah only*, whom it would not be *blasphemous* to denominate the MIGHTY GOD:[7] *comp.* Isa. x. 21: Jer. xxxii. 18: Neh. ix. 32.

We have already found occasion to notice, as an indication of the divine dignity of the Messiah, *in connexion with the period of his ministry*, that the last and greatest of the prophets of the old dispensation was sent before him, to prepare his way, and to usher in his presence. Now, this view of the subject is fully substantiated by the fact, that John the Baptist was himself the subject of prophecy, and is described by his predecessors as the immediate precursor of the *Supreme Being*.

We may first advert to the predictions of the prophet Malachi on this subject. They are as follows: "Behold, (saith Jehovah) I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple: even the Messenger (or Angel) of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, saith Jehovah of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is

[6] Heb. אבי עד.

[7] Heb. אל גבור. The substantive אל *Deus*, is not to be confounded with איל *robur* or *robustus*. Michaëlis derives it from an Arabic root, signifying, to *do good*; and if this derivation is correct, it may be considered as perfectly synonymous with our word *God*. אל is used, in a *multitude* of passages of the Hebrew Scriptures, to designate *Jehovah*; nor, is there, I believe, a single instance of its application to any being who was not the object either of true or false worship. In the present instance, its usual meaning is confirmed by the addition of the adjective גבור *mighty*. Jehovah is again denominated אל גבור *the mighty God*, in the very next chapter: *vide* ch. x. ver. 21.

like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto Jehovah an offering in righteousness:" Mal. iii. 1—3. Again, "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of JEHOVAH:" Mal. iv. 5.

That John the Baptist was the person whom Malachi describes as the messenger sent by Jehovah, and as Elijah the prophet, may be asserted on the authority of our Saviour himself; for, when speaking to his disciples respecting the Baptist, Jesus said, "This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my Messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee;[8] and again, "This is Elias which was for to come:" Matt. xi. 10, 14.

This point being settled, we may, in the next place, learn from the history of the New Testament, that the other Person here pointed out—the Person whom John was to precede—was Jesus Christ: an inference which appears to be fully confirmed, first, by the title *Messenger*, or *Angel of the Covenant*, a title wholly inapplicable to the Father, yet properly descriptive of the Son: and secondly, by the comparison, with this passage, of Matt. iii. 11, 12; Luke iii. 16, 17; where we find John describing the cleansing, fiery, baptism of his successor, in terms which substantially and remarkably accord with the words of this prophecy.[9]

Lastly, while these prophecies plainly mark the distinction between the Father and the Son, they never-

[8] Our Lord's quotation of this passage is in precise accordance with that of the evangelist Mark (ch. i. 2.); and the difference between the words thus cited and the passage, as it now stands in the prophecies of Malachi, must, I presume, be attributed to some various reading in the text, either of the Hebrew original or of the Septuagint version, of which we have now no record.

[9] "I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire:" Matt. iii. 11, 12.

theless represent the latter under the character of the Supreme Being; for, in Mal. iii. 1, 2, he is described as the LORD,[1] and is represented, not only as coming to his own temple, but as exercising divine attributes in the spiritual purification and paternal chastisement of his people; and again, in the obviously corresponding passage of the following chapter, (Mal. iv. 5) he appears to be denominated JEHOVAH.

These passages in the book of Malachi may be regarded as containing an explanatory republication of one of the prophecies of Isaiah, who has described John the Baptist as a person "crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of Jehovah—make straight in the desert a highway for our GOD:" Isaiah xl. 3. Now it cannot, I think, with any truth be asserted, that John was the forerunner of the Father, or that he prepared the Father's way; for the Father was the sender of both John and Jesus, and was equally the author of the Jewish, the baptismal, and the Christian dispensations. But John was the forerunner of Jesus Christ; and when he preached repentance, and declared the near approach of the kingdom of heaven—when he spoke, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"—when he baptized the people with water unto repentance—when he directed their attention to that Saviour who was to baptize them with the Holy Ghost—when he declared his own declension, and the increase of him who was come "from heaven," and was "above all;" —then did he prepare the way of the SON OF GOD. If, therefore, we are to depend on the declarations of inspired prophecy, we are surely safe in concluding, that the incarnate Word, of whom John was the appointed and designated precursor, was no less a Being than JEHOVAH, the GOD of Israel.

This plain reasoning will be found to derive sub-

[1] THE LORD הָאָדוֹן. The substantive אָדוֹן *Lord*, when preceded by the article ה, as in this passage, uniformly denotes the Supreme Being: *comp.* Exod. xxiii. 17; xxxiv. 23; Isa. i. 24; xi. 1; x. 16, 33; xix. 4. *Vide Taylor's Conc. and Rosenmuller, Schol in loc.*

stantial confirmation, first, from the evangelical import of the context in Isa. xl; for this prophecy contains an especial reference to the forgiveness of sin,[2] and to the eternal endurance of the truths of the *Gospel;*[3] and it makes mention of Jehovah in his *pastoral* character, and as actually *appearing* in the cities of Judah:[4] and, secondly, from the plain testimony of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who have severally quoted this prediction as applicable to the Baptist; and *for the very purpose of illustrating the fact, that he was the forerunner of Jesus Christ:* Matt. iii. 1—17: Mark i. 1—8: Luke iii. 1—22.

On a due consideration of the scriptural evidences now adverted to, I know not on what principle we can refuse to allow that the angel of God declared the deity of the coming Messiah, when he thus spoke to Zacharias respecting his promised son: "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the LORD THEIR GOD; and he shall go before HIM in the spirit and power of Elias..... to make ready a people prepared for the LORD;" (Luke i. 16, 17;) and also, that the same doctrine flowed from the lips of Zacharias himself, when he thus addressed his new-born infant: "And thou, child shall be called the prophet of the HIGHEST; for thou shalt go before the face of THE LORD, to prepare his ways:" Luke i. 76.

In connexion with the period when our Lord was *dwelling* among the Israelites, his divinity appears to be again recognized in one of the prophecies of Zechariah. After describing his interview, in a wonderful vision, with that mysterious angel of Jehovah, *who*

[2] "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that *her iniquity is pardoned:*" Isa. xl. 1, 2.

[3] "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever:" Isa. xl. 8. The apostle Peter quotes this passage, and adds, "and this is the word which by the *Gospel* is preached unto you:" 1 Pet. i. 25.

[4] "Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young:" Isa. xl. 9—11.

was Jehovah (*vide* i. 12—20) the prophet, commissioned by his heavenly visitor, breaks forth in the following evangelical strain: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for, lo! I come, (*comp.* Psalm xl. 7.) and I will *dwell in the midst* of thee, saith JEHOVAH. And many nations shall be joined to Jehovah in that day, and shall be MY people, and I will *dwell in the midst of thee*, and thou shalt know that JEHOVAH OF HOSTS *hath sent me unto thee.* And Jehovah shall inherit Judah, his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before JEHOVAH; for he is *raised up* out of his holy habitation:" ii. 10—13. We can scarcely fail to trace in this divine effusion a delineation of the Messiah—that anointed Person, who was to inherit Judah as the governor of the Lord's people, and whose coming in the flesh was the appointed signal for the conversion of many nations to God and his truth. Who, then, was this Messiah? *Jehovah raised up out of his holy habitation—Jehovah sent by Jehovah to dwell among his people Israel: comp.* John i. 14.[5]

Before we close the page of prophecy, we may advert to Zech. xii. 10—a passage which appears to declare the deity of Christ in connexion with his *sufferings and death.* "And I (saith Jehovah) will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon ME whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." This prophecy is applied to Jesus Christ, by his apostle John, indirectly in Rev. i. 7. and positively in John xix. 34—37. We may therefore receive it as affording an evidence that, when the inhabitants of Jerusalem persecuted their Messiah, and when, in yet more literal accomplishment of the prophecy, they *pierced* his hands, his feet, and his side, they persecuted and pierced *him*, who, although the subject of their cruelty only in his human nature, was nevertheless their divine Lord and Governor—*Jehovah*

[5] *Vide Calvin and Gill, in loc.*

himself.[6] Thus it was that they "*crucified the* LORD OF GLORY:" 1 Cor. ii. 8.

Here I can scarcely refrain from reminding the reader of the words of the apostle Paul, according to the commonly-received reading of 1 Tim. iii. 16—"*Great is the mystery of Godliness;* GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH," &c. Although, in substituting, for the word here rendered *God*, the pronoun signifying *who* or *he who*, Griesbach (whose useful labours have so largely contributed to the settlement of the sacred text) has always appeared to me to have formed an erroneous decision,[7] yet I would not press into the

[6] Zech. xii. 10. ודקרו אלי את אשר וחביטו. "And they shall look upon *me* whom they have pierced." For י *me*, in this passage, about fifty MSS. (a very small proportion of those which have been collated, and not of the better sort) read ו *him*. This reading has been adopted by some commentators, under the notion of its being supported by the apostle John, who quotes it as follows: ὄψονται εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν, "they shall look on *whom* they have pierced:" but, as the apostle has expressed no antecedent to his relative pronoun, he may be considered as merely neutral in the present question. Not so the ancient versions, that is, the Septuagint, Syriac, Arabic, and Vulgate, with the Chaldee Targum, all of which, as well as Theodotian, and probably Aquila and Symmachus, read the pronoun in the first person, ME: *vide De Rossi, Var. Lect. Vet. Test.* tom. iii. p. 217.

The rapid change in this passage, from the first to the third person, is not inconsistent with the genius of Hebrew poetry. It is, however, well avoided in the excellent version of the passage proposed by the learned Dathe: "Intuebuntur me quem transfixerunt, atque *ea de re* lugebunt, quemadmodum de filio unico lugetur: plangent de *ea re* amarissime, quemadmodum de filio primogenito."

[7] The various readings of this passage, which have been so largely the subject of discussion and controversy, are ΘC (Θεὸς) *God*—OC (ὃς) *who*—O (ὃ) *which*. O is the reading adopted, with little exception, by the whole Latin church, and this reading is supported by most of the ancient versions. ΟC is a reading which recommends itself, chiefly as the most probable *foundation* of the more common reading ὃ; but, the direct and *ascertained* authority by which it is supported is *extremely slender indeed;* that is, two or

evidence of divine truth a passage which is certainly the subject of reasonable *dispute*. I must, however, be allowed to remark, that, on the *highly probable supposition* of the genuinenesss of its commonly-received reading, this passage does no more than promulgate, in a concentrated form, a doctrine which is with *equal clearness* revealed in these several ancient prophecies.

And now, in conclusion, we may turn to a passage in the Gospel of John, which narrates one of the most interesting circumstances in the history of Jesus, and which fixes the doctrine of his deity in connexion with his *resurrection*. That this last and most wonderful of the miracles of the Son of God, afforded a sure indication of his divine power, I have already found occasion to remark; and we plainly learn from the Gospels, that the apostles were exceedingly slow to believe that their Lord and Master, whose death appeared for a time to have suspended their faith and hope, had really burst the bonds of death asunder, and had raised again "the temple of his body," according to his promise. When Jesus, by submitting himself to the personal examination of his disciples, condescended to demonstrate to them the reality of this event, (John xx. 20) the apostle Thomas, "called Didymus," was not of their company; and we find that *he* refused to be convinced on the subject, even by the united testimony of all his brethren. "Except," said he "I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my

three manuscripts, a very few, if any, fathers, and no versions.*—The reading Θεὸς is supported by two versions, (not of the *most* ancient date) by many fathers, and with scarcely any exception, by the whole mass of manuscripts of every date and class.

* The Coptic, Sahidic, and, margin of the Philoxenian Syriac versions, are quoted by Griesbach, as authorities for ὃς; but Lawrence has proved it to be entirely doubtful whether their reading was ὃς or ὃ. He has also shewn, that the Erp. Arabic, the Ethiopic, and the two Syriac versions, are clear authorities, not for ὃς, but for ὃ: *see his Remarks on the Systematic Classification of Griesbach's MSS.*

finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, *I will not believe*. And after eight days, again, his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then said he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless but believing:" John xx. 25—27. In the fresh proof which was thus afforded him of that knowledge of the secrets of men which ever distinguished his divine Master, as well as in the stupendous and now ascertained miracle of the resurrection, Thomas was furnished with an ample practical evidence of the real divinity of his Lord. No wonder, therefore, that, under the powerful influence of his renewed convictions, he "answered and *said unto him*, MY LORD AND MY GOD....." Then Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: *blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed:*" John xx. 28, 29.

How plain and striking is this narration! How clearly sufficient, *in itself*, to prove that the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ is a doctrine of Scripture! Let it be observed, in the first place, that the apostle's words were not merely an exclamation, but were *addressed to Jesus:* "Thomas answered and said *unto him*, My Lord, and my God:" secondly, that these words contained the apostle's *confession of faith*, for they were prompted by the exhortation of Jesus: "Be not faithless, but *believing;*" and were evidently adverted to by our Lord, when he afterwards said, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast *believed:*" and lastly, that on the faith which Thomas had *thus* confessed, the Saviour of mankind did not hesitate to pronounce his blessing: "*Blessed* are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Truly it is the eternal Son of God, *one* in the divine nature with the Father, and therefore an Almighty and Omnipresent Saviour, in whom his followers, though now they "*see him not, yet believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!*" 1 Pet. i. 8.

Such are the evidences which the Scriptures afford us of the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, *in connexion with his abode on earth.*

We may now briefly review the several points of the whole argument.

The circumstances and qualities attributed to Jesus Christ by the prophets who foretold, and by the evangelists who related, the events of his life and death, are many of them such as plainly prove that, after his incarnation, he was *man*—a person endued with a human soul and a human body.

When we compare this evidence with the declarations of Scripture, respecting his preexistence in the divine nature, we are compelled to allow that, when the Word was made flesh, he, who before had been God only, became God and man—a doctrine which more especially distinguishes those parts of the New Testament which describe the original deity and incarnation of Christ, in connexion with each other, and in the order of their succession.

Jesus Christ, uniting in himself the human with the divine nature, is *one* person, *one* Mediator, *one* Lord. Nevertheless, when we read of his actions and discourses, it is important that we should distinguish those particulars which were the consequences of his humanity from others which resulted from his deity.

The consequences of the humanity of Jesus Christ, detailed in the histories of his abode on earth, could not have contradicted or overturned the doctrine of his deity, as it is elsewhere declared in Scripture, even had those consequences formed the *only* subject of the Gospel narrations. But, in point of fact, these narratives, together with other parts of the Bible which relate to our Lord's incarnation and human existence, abound also in the evidences of his deity.

When the Lord Jesus declared himself to be the Saviour of the world, and a final object of that faith which ensures, to those who possess it, the gift of eternal life—when he presented himself to the notice of his followers, as the moral and spiritual governor of mankind, the pardoner of sin, the authoritative

repealer of parts of the divine law, the Lord of the Sabbath, greater than the temple, the giver and sender of the Holy Spirit—when he said to the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I AM"—when he spoke as one omnipresent—above all, when he described the reciprocity, the even fellowship, and the equal community of works and attributes, which subsisted in the divine unity between his father and himself—he indirectly, but indubitably, asserted his claim to the nature and character of God.

When he manifested an intuitive knowledge of the thoughts and secret murmurings of men, and thus, in conformity with his own declaration, evinced that *he* is the searcher of the reins and the hearts—when he effected his own miracles (as well as those of his apostles) and thus controled or altered, by his powerful fiat, the established order of nature—more especially when he burst asunder the bonds of death, and quickened again his own mortal body—he brought into exercise the attributes, and displayed the powers of deity.

When that act of worship was addressed to him, which was indignantly rejected by an apostle, and by an angel, because they were *creatures*, and was so addressed to him as plainly to indicate religious faith and spiritual adoration, he was the object of those honors which are due to God only; and when, notwithstanding his acknowledged humility, he freely admitted such honors, he again bore a virtual testimony to the truth of his own divinity.

When many glorious collateral circumstances accompanied the several parts of his human history—when the multitudinous chorus of angels hallowed his nativity; when the greatest of human prophets ushered in his ministry; when men and devils, and the very winds, were subdued by his presence; when darkened and agitated nature owned his death: these things were all in harmony with the stupendous fact, that *God was manifest in the flesh.*

Lastly, when the prophets, with reference successively to the birth, the life, and the crucifixion, of the Messiah, describe him as God with us, as the mighty

God, as the Lord coming to his own temple, as Jehovah, whose ways were prepared by Elijah, or by "the voice crying in the wilderness," as Jehovah sent by Jehovah to dwell among his people, as Jehovah whom the Israelites persecuted and pierced—when the writers of the New Testament, without reserve or hesitation, apply some of those prophecies to our Saviour—and when the apostle Thomas, after witnessing the truth of his resurrection, calls him his Lord and his God—these inspired servants of the Almighty confirm and fasten the whole preceding series of evidence, and place on the doctrine of the eternal divinity of Jesus Christ, as it is connected with his abode on earth, an intelligible and irrefragable seal.

PART III.

ON CHRIST IN HIS REIGN.

Among the numerous prophecies of Scripture, which declare the coming, and depict the character and offices, of our Lord Jesus Christ, there are few which do not make some mention of his *reign in glory*. The very name by which he was known among the ancient Jews was indeed immediately connected with his regality. The Messiah—the anointed one—who was to sit for ever on the throne of David, proclaiming restoration to Israel, and dispensing judgment and righteousness to the world at large, was the object of their fondest expectations; and these expectations were founded on the declarations of holy men of old, who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:" 1 Pet. i. 21.

In many of the predictions alluded to, the description of the reign of the Messiah is combined with various details respecting the prior circumstances of his mission: as in Micah v. 2, 3, Zech. ix. 9. Others of them, however, relate to Christ solely in his character of a monarch. "I will declare the decree," said the Messiah, in the second Psalm, "JEHOVAH

hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron: thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings! be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him:" 7—12: *compare* Acts xiii. 33, Heb. i. 5. In another of the Psalms, a sublime description of Israel's Messiah is presented to us under the type of the "king's son," "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust..... Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy..... His name shall endure for ever. His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed:" Psalm lxxii. 6—9, 11—13, 17.

The "Prince of Peace" was one of the most distinguishing titles of the child who was to be born of a virgin. "Of the increase of his government and peace," exclaims the prophet, "there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and even for ever:" Isaiah xi. 6, 7. Again, "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, until he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law:" Isaiah xlii. 4.

"Therefore will I save my flock," said Jehovah by his prophet Ezekiel, "and they shall no more be a

prey, and I will judge between cattle and cattle. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant DAVID; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David a prince amongst them..... And I will raise up for them *a plant of renown*, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more:" xxxiv. 22—29.

In the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, recorded by Daniel, the kingdom which the "God of heaven" would "set up"—that is, doubtless, the kingdom of the Messiah—was represented by the stone cut out without hands, which, "became a great mountain and *filled the whole earth*;" and that eminent prophet has recorded the particulars of another glorious revelation, which was made, on the same subject, to himself: "I saw in the night-visions," says he, "and behold one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed:" vii. 13, 14.

Such are a few of the declarations of ancient prophecy respecting that son of David and son of God, who was to arise in due season, to be the Shepherd and Prince of Israel, and the supreme governor of the world at large. Other predictions of a similar import may be found in 2 Sam. vii. 12—17: *compare* Heb. i. 5. Psalm xlv. 1—7: *compare* Heb. i. 8, 9; cx. 1—4: *compare* Matt. xxii. 44: Heb. i. 13: Isaiah xxxii. 1, 2; lv. 3, 4: *compare* Acts xiii. 34: Jer. xxiii. 5, 6: xxxiii. 15: Ezekiel xxxvii. 21—24: Daniel ix. 25: Micah v. 2—4: *compare* Matt. ii. 6: Zech. ix. 9, 10: *compare* Matt. xxi. 5.

I have not hesitated to cite these numerous prophecies as directly applicable to our subject, because their relation to the Messiah is, for the most part,

acknowledged by both Jews and Christians. For, although some of the Jews have attempted, by a strained interpretation, to apply a very few of these predictions solely to their temporal monarchs; and, although, in this work of perversion, the Christian commentator has now and then very strangely supported them; yet, on a *general* view of these numerous, yet accordant, passages, it must, I think, be confessed, by all who acknowledge the divine authority of the Old Testament, that the great person whose character and circumstances are thus unfolded is *he* whom, *from the tenor and language of these very prophecies*, the Hebrews have so long been accustomed to denominate *the Messiah*. Now, the Christian, who is thus far accompanied by the Jew, is of course prepared to advance a step farther, and to allow that the Anointed King of Israel, of whom the prophets have so explicitly testified, is no other than Jesus Christ, *the Head of his own church*—"*the King of kings, and Lord of lords*:" (Rev. xix. 16;) and in this conclusion he is amply confirmed, not only by that internal evidence which so powerfully bespeaks for these predictions an evangelical interpretation, but by the direct application of many of them to our Saviour, in the inspired volume of the New Testament: *see* Matt. xxi. 5; xxii. 44. Acts xiii. 33, 34. Hebrews i. 5, 8, 9, 13. Rev. ii. 27, &c.: *compare* Luke i. 30—33.

If, then, it be admitted that Jesus Christ is the true subject of all these descriptions, the inquiry immediately suggests itself, to what period of his recorded history they are more especially to be understood as applying; and the answer to this inquiry I conceive to be very plain. Although the Word, or Son of the Father, was the spiritual king of Israel before his incarnation, and although his divine authority over his people was sometimes exerted even during his abode on earth, yet on a general view of the annals of evangelical truth, we can scarcely fail to perceive, that the precise application of these glowing predictions is to that part of the history of the Son of God which commenced with his ascension,—which

still continues—and which, as far as relates to the mediatorial economy, (and so far only) is represented as terminating in the great day of final and universal retribution.

After the Lord Jesus had conversed with his disciples, for many days, subsequently to his resurrection, "he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight:" Acts i. 9. Then it was, as we learn from other passages of Holy Writ, that he entered into glory unsearchable and eternal. The "everlasting doors" of heaven were opened to receive their "King." Having triumphed over all his spiritual enemies, and trodden on the serpent's head, the Son of God resumed his station "far above all heavens, that he might fill all things:" Eph. iv. 10. "Being the brightness of (the Father's) glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had, by himself, purged our sins, (he) sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High:" Heb. i. 3. Then did the Father highly exalt him, and give him "a name which is *above every name*, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father:" Phil. ii. 9—11.

These and other passages in the writings of the evangelists and apostles, descriptive of the power and exaltation of the Messiah, admit of a close comparison with the prophecies already cited; and thus are we placed in possession of the corresponding testimony of the two constituent parts of the Bible to the same branch of Divine Truth—to the same part of the revealed history of the Son of God. Although, therefore, the accomplishment of these prophecies respecting the universal and unbounded reign of Jesus is to be regarded as progressive, and may be very far at present from its full *completion*, yet the commencement of that accomplishment is obviously to be fixed at the glorious period when he quitted the sphere of his personal humiliation,—when he "ascended up on high" and "led captivity captive."

Having premised these observations respecting the part of our Lord's history to which the predictions cited above are most properly applicable, we may proceed to examine the information which may be derived from the scriptural descriptions of the Messiah's reign in glory, respecting *the nature and character of the Messiah himself*; and this examination will be the more interesting, because it relates to a period still continuing; and will therefore be the means of instructing us in what point of view we are ourselves to regard the Saviour of Mankind, and what are the dispositions and duties towards himself, which he is actually now requiring at our hands.

In the first place, then, I would observe, that the Messiah, in his reign, as well as in the preceding divisions of his history, is declared in Scripture to be the *Mediator between God and Man.* As God has redeemed, so he also governs, the world, *through* Jesus Christ; and, in this respect, as well as in many others, Christ is *the Way* through whom alone we are brought near to God: John xiv. 6. All things in the Christian dispensation are described as being *from*, or *of*, and *unto*, the Father, and *by*, *through*, or *in*, the Son. "For, though there be that are called gods," says the apostle Paul, "whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many) but to us there is but one God, the Father, *of* whom are all things, and we in (or *unto*) him;[8] and one Lord Jesus Christ, *by* whom are all things, and we *by* him:" 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. And, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times," the Father will "gather together in one all things *in* Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even *in him:*" Eph. i. 10; *comp.* iv. 4—6.

Now, Christ, the Mediator between God and man, is to be regarded as bearing the office, and as acting in the capacity of a viceroy. The dominion which he exercises over the creatures of God is *committed* to him. The Father has highly exalted him, has *given* him a name above every name, (Phil. ii. 9;) has *put* all things under his feet, (Eph. i. 22;) has *bestowed* upon

[8] εἰς αὐτὸν.

him those gifts and graces which Jesus is himself described as shedding forth upon mankind: Ps. lxviii. 18: Acts ii. 33. And, as Christ has thus received his kingdom, and all the powers by which he conducts it, at the hands of the Father, so also to *him* he is subject—to *him* he belongs. The Father is frequently represented as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ: Eph. i. 17: 1 Pet. i. 3. Jesus himself, in the Revelation, calls him "*My* God:" iii. 12. "The head of every man is Christ.....and the head of Christ is God:" 1 Cor. xi. 3. "Ye are Christ's," says the apostle to his converts, "and Christ is God's:" 1 Cor. iii. 23.

These and other statements respecting the subjection of Christ, even during his reign in glory, to the Father who sent him, and from whom his kingdom was received, are rendered perfectly intelligible by the unquestionable fact, that our Saviour not only lived and died, but rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, *a man*. If we admit that Jesus of Nazareth was endued with a human soul, (and where is the unsophisticated reader of the four Gospels who will question the fact?) we must also admit, on principles already recognized, that, after he had expired on the cross, *his soul continued to exist;* and, continuing to exist, that soul was presently reunited to his body, which was raised on earth and glorified in heaven: Luke xxiv. 31—53: Acts i. 9—11: 1 Cor. xv. 44—49: Phil. iii. 21: Rev. i. 5, 7, 13, &c. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus;" (1 Tim. ii. 5;) and this man Christ Jesus, the Son of Mary, the rod out of the stem of Jesse, "*was dead and is alive:*" Rev. ii. 8. He is the "*first-born from the dead,*" (Col. i. 18) the "*first-born among many brethren,*" (Rom. viii. 29) "*the first fruits of them that slept,*" (1 Cor. xv. 20) "*the Captain of our salvation*" *made* "*perfect through sufferings:*" Heb. ii. 10. Herein, therefore, the children of God, who are led by his Spirit, may rejoice with unspeakable joy, even that Christ is "not ashamed to call them brethren," (Heb. ii. 11) that they are "heirs of God, and *joint heirs with Christ,*" (Rom.

viii. 17) and finally, that they have a merciful and faithful High Priest, who is "touched with the feeling of their infirmities," and who, having himself "suffered being tempted," is able to "succour them that are tempted:" Heb. ii. 18; iv. 15.

But, while we acknowledge that Jesus, in his reign, is still clothed with the human nature, and that he is therefore in all things subject to God the Father, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," yet, on the other hand, from a variety of particulars recorded in Scripture, in connexion with this glorious division of his revealed history, it will by no means be difficult to prove that Christ, the head of the Church, and the Lord of all things, is also GOD. The analogy of divine truth, and the comparison of Scripture with Scripture, will be found, I believe, very plainly to evince, that no one can possess the authority, exercise the powers, or rightly receive the honours, which are severally attributed to Christ in his reign, who does not *himself* participate in the nature and essence of the Supreme Being.

I shall now proceed to unfold these evidences of the deity of *Christ our King*, in the order which, after due consideration, I deem to be the clearest.

I. That Jesus Christ, in his reign, is the Shepherd and Bishop of souls; (1 Pet. ii. 25;) the supreme Head of that church of God, which is gathered together out of every kindred, and tongue, and people; (Eph. iv. 15;)—that he has bought his followers with a price; (1 Cor. vi. 20;) and that they are now his *absolute possession;*—is a doctrine which is clearly stated in various parts of Scripture, and which forms, more especially, one of the most conspicuous and distinguishing features of the apostolic Epistles. Now, in this point of view, Jesus Christ is to be regarded as occupying a position infinitely superior to that of any of the patriarchs, or prophets, or indeed of any of the mere creatures of God, however powerful their nature, or exalted their station. *They* are nothing more than servants—the mere subordinate agents of the Father's will. *He* is the Son of that Father, and in his own power and authority, he forms, possesses, and regulates,

the Father's household. Such a distinction between Christ and the prophets was clearly indicated by Jesus himself, in his parable of the *servants* and the *son*, who were successively sent to receive the fruits of the vineyard; (Matt. xxi. 33—41;) and is powerfully maintained and elucidated in the following comparison between Jesus and Moses: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man, (or this person[9]) was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as *he who hath builded the house* hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man, *but he that built all things is God.* And Moses, verily, was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; *but Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we,* if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end:" Heb. iii. 1—6. It is generally allowed, and is indeed quite evident, that the word "house," here signifies "household"—the household, or church, of God. Moses presided as a servant over the ancient Israelitish church, which was, in his day, the house of Jehovah. Jesus Christ, *as a Son*, governs that larger family of God, the Christian church. Nor does he merly *govern* that church; he actually *possesses* it. It is *his own* house, because he "builded" it. And, in building this spiritual house, he displayed his divine nature and attributes,—for "*he that built all things is God.*"

But it is not merely over the Church that Jesus Christ exercises his dominion. All the creatures of God are, for the church's sake, made subject to his reign. *All power* is given unto him in heaven, and in earth: Matt. xxviii. 18. He is able, by his working, to subdue *all things* unto himself: Phil. iii. 21. He is the "heir of *all things:*" Heb. i. 2. "Angels, authorities, and powers," are "made subject to him:" 1 Pet. iii. 22. God "set him at his own right hand

9 οὗτος.

in the heavenly places, *far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;* and put *all things* under his feet, and gave him to be the head over *all things* to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that *filleth all in all:*" Eph. i. 20—23. He ascended up "far above all heavens, that he might *fill all things:*" Eph. iv. 10.

Now, although, in these and other similar descriptions of the *empire* of the Lord Jesus Christ, the distinctive character of the Father, who put all things under him, and who is therefore excepted from that empire, is plainly recognized, yet, I think, the more deeply we reflect on the subject, the more thoroughly we shall become convinced, that the Person who is thus possessed of supreme and unlimited authority over the universe of God—the Person who commands, controls, and regulates, the most exalted and powerful of created essences—the Person, of whom it is declared, in the very words which the Almighty has elsewhere appropriated to himself, that at his name, "*every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess,*" (Phil. ii. 10, 11; *comp.* Isa. xlv. 23) cannot possibly be a *mere man*, or the spirit of a mere man made perfect, but must actually participate in the nature and being of the only true God. In that sublime view of his absolute and unlimited authority, which the sacred writers have thus spread before us, we can scarcely fail to perceive a clear confirmation of evidences already considered, that, as the Father and the Son are *one* in power, and *one* in honour, they are also *one* in essence.

II. The preceding argument, which rests on the *authority* and *extent* of the reign of our Redeemer, may be satisfactorily supported by the consideration of its *nature* and *character*. From the prophetical declarations of the Old Testament already considered, we plainly learn that the introduction of the Christian dispensation was to be accompanied by the establishment of a powerful and ever-enduring kingdom, over which the Messiah was to be king. The prophecy has been accomplished; the Christian dispensation has been introduced; the Son of God has been made

manifest in the flesh; he has ascended up on high; and where is it that we are to look for his kingdom? Not in temporal dignity—not, as the Jews had fondly expected, in the powers and glory of this present transitory world; but in a dominion conducted by an invisible agency over all the creatures of God; and, as far as relates to mankind, in *a moral and spiritual government over their souls.* When Jesus was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come—that kingdom which the predictions already alluded to had excited them to expect—"he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, lo! here, or lo! there, for behold *the kingdom of God is within you;*" Luke xvii. 20, 21. The same or a precisely accordant doctrine was promulgated by Jesus, when he was standing before the tribunal of Pilate. When the Roman governor addressed him with the question, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "*My kingdom is not of this world. If* my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom *not from hence:*" John xviii. 36.

Scarcely any thing can be more interesting than the account given to us, in the New Testament, of the sudden illumination, on this subject, of the apostles themselves. Like the other Jews, they appear to have conceived very eager expectations of a visible, worldly kingdom. Such expectations were constantly discouraged by their Divine Master, who ever taught them the lesson of child-like humility, and who, for his own part, declared that he came not "to be ministered unto, but to minister." Yet, even after his resurrection, we find them still clinging to the same hope, and inquiring of their Lord, whether he would at that time "restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Acts i. 6. In his answer to this inquiry, Jesus, instead of immediately undeceiving them, prepared their minds for more spiritual views by the promise of the Holy Ghost; and no sooner was that promise fulfilled, than the whole tenor of their thoughts

respecting the kingdom of the Messiah was changed. No longer did they look for temporal victory or worldly dominion. They now comprehended that their beloved Lord and Master was already exalted at the right hand of the Father, to be a Prince and a Saviour: immediately they began to preach *repentance* and *remission* of *sins* in his name; and they hesitated not to explain the prophecies which spake of the son of David, whom God was to raise up to sit upon his throne, as *already accomplished* in Jesus, who was "made both Lord and Christ"—who was enthroned in glory at the right hand of the Father—who had led captivity captive—and who was now shedding forth, upon all believers, the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. In the Epistles, which present to us the standard of apostolic faith at a still later and riper period, not a trace is to be found of any Jewish notions respecting the establishment of a worldly kingdom. The views which the writers of these treatises entertained respecting the nature and progress of Christianity, appear to have become absolutely unconnected with prospects of such a nature; but, in Jesus, the Mediator between God and man, they recognized their eternal and celestial sovereign. They submitted themselves to the laws of his government as to a spiritual dispensation; and they could now declare to their brethren, that "*the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost:*" Rom. xiv. 17.

When we reflect on the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ, we cannot be surprised that it is in the New Testament, still more usually denominated the kingdom of *heaven*, or the kingdom of *God*. The comparison of numerous passages in that Sacred Volume, affords an ample evidence that these terms are all employed to express *one and the same kingdom*. It is the kingdom of *heaven*, because the King of heaven rules over it, and because it appertains to unseen and celestial objects: it is the kingdom of *God*, not only because the Father has appointed it, but because it is conducted and regulated by the wisdom and power of the Deity: it

is the kingdom of *Christ*, because Christ is the glorious Head of it—because he is the person by whom, in the divine economy, *that wisdom and power are actually exerted.*

III. For the more particular elucidation of this subject, it may now be observed, that Jesus Christ, in his reign, is the author of *grace.* The passages of Scripture, in which the gift of grace is attributed to him, are very numerous. Sometimes he is presented to our attention singly, as the bestower of it; at other times he is, in this respect, associated with God, even the Father, and is described as being in union with *him*, the source from which it flows. "Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ," is the salutation of the apostle Paul to the Romans: Rom. i. 7. Similar terms are employed by him at the commencement of most of his other Epistles; and the farewell, with which these apostolic letters are usually concluded, is, "the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you," or "with your spirit:" Gal. vi. 18: Phil. iv. 22: 1 Thess. v. 28: 2 Thess. iii. 18: Philem. 25. In the conclusion of this second Epistle to the Corinthians, more especially, the grace of Christ and the love of God are evidently mentioned as joint and *parallel* blessings: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all:" 2 Cor. xiii. 14. So, also, the apostle John concludes the book of Revelation, as follows: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen:" Rev. xxii. 21.

The term "grace," as it is employed in the Scriptures, is one of a very extensive import. It literally signifies *favour;* and, as it relates to the Divine Being, is applicable to the whole variety of blessings, but especially to those of a spiritual nature, which he condescends to impart to his dependent creature, man. Thus it is with the Lord Jesus Christ, through the riches of whose favour the members of his church know all their petitions answered, and all their need supplied. Are they in want of faith? they are taught to ask it of him. "Increase our faith" was the cry

of the disciples to *Jesus*: Luke xvii. 5: *comp.* 1 Cor. vii. 25. "Peace be to the brethren," said the apostle Paul, "and love with *faith*, from God the Father, and *the Lord Jesus Christ*:" Eph. vi. 23. Are they sorrowful, cast down, and afflicted? To Jesus, as well as to the Father, they are taught to look for consolation. "Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself," said the same apostle, "and God, even our Father,—*comfort your hearts*, and establish you in every good word and work:" 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. Are they attacked by their spiritual enemy, encompassed with many trials, and destitute of all strength in themselves to maintain the conflict?—let them listen to the words of their Redeemer—"*My* grace is sufficient"—"*my* strength is made perfect in weakness:" 2 Cor. xii. 9: *comp.* 2 Tim. iv. 17: 2 Peter ii. 9: Rev. iii. 10.

Very clear, in these several particulars, is the testimony of inspiration to the *grace* or *divine favour*, bestowed on the true members of the church by its all-powerful Head; but there are three principal respects, in which it becomes us more especially to observe the operation of the grace of Jesus Christ; namely, forgiveness, conversion, and sanctification.

That authority over the world to forgive sin, which we have already noticed as claimed and exercised by Jesus, was a power which belonged unalterably to his divine nature; and it is fully brought into exercise now that God hath "exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, *and forgiveness of sins*:" Acts v. 31. "*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*," was the petition which the dying Stephen addressed, on behalf of his persecutors, to his glorified Master: Acts vii. 60. When Paul exhorted the Colossians to put on "bowels of mercies," and to forbear one another in love, he added, "Even as *Christ* forgave (or *freely forgave*[1]) you, so also do ye:" Col. iii. 13. He had himself experienced the pardoning love of Christ, and was anxious that others should participate in the same grace: "Howbeit," said he, "for this cause I obtained *mercy*, that in me,

[1] ἐχαρίσατο.

first, *Jesus Christ* might shew forth *all long-suffering*, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting:" 1 Tim. i. 16. So, also, the apostle Jude commands us to "keep" ourselves "in the love of God, looking for the *mercy* of our Lord Jesus Christ unto *eternal life*:" verse 21: *comp.* Acts xv. 11.

The efficacy of the grace of our Saviour, for the *conversion of sinners*, is clearly recognized by the sacred writers. We read that he is exalted to bestow *repentance* as well as pardon; (Acts v. 31;) and the Greek word, here and in other passages rendered "repentance," properly signifies that complete change of judgment, intention, and feeling, which is more accurately expressed by our word "*conversion*."[2] "Unto you, first," cried the inspired Peter to his Jewish auditors, "God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in *turning away* every one of you from his iniquities:" Acts iii. 26. The apostle Paul was a memorable instance of that total transmutation of mind and heart, which is often produced in sinners by the grace of Jesus Christ; (1 Tim. i. 12—15;) and, long after this change had taken place in him, we find him expressing his earnest desire to know yet more of *him*, and of "the *power of his resurrection*;" that so he might "apprehend (or lay hold of) that for which also" he was "*apprehended of Christ Jesus*:" Phil. iii. 12: *comp.* John x. 16.

Sanctification, lastly, as well as conversion, is the work of that Spirit which is bestowed on the people of God *by the Lord Jesus Christ*. "The anointing which ye have received of *him*," says the apostle John, when speaking of the Lord Jesus, "abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, *ye shall abide in him*..... If ye know that he is righteous, *ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him*:" 1 John ii. 27—29. Again—"Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him

[2] μετάνοια. *Vide Schleusner in voc.* 3.

is no sin. *Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not:*" 1 John iii. 5, 6. The apostle Peter exhorts those who have already tasted that Jesus "*is gracious,*" to come unto *him*, "as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious," that they may be "*built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ;*" (1 Pet. ii. 2—5;) and Paul thus commends his Thessalonian converts to the same edifying power of Jesus. "And *the Lord* make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you; *to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God:*" 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13. Finally, it is the Lord Jesus who is described as *purifying* unto himself "a peculiar people, zealous of good works;" (Tit. ii. 14;) and as *sanctifying* and *cleansing* his church "with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it *to himself*, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it might be holy, and without blemish:" Eph. v. 26, 27.

Thus rich, thus powerful, thus effective for every purpose of forgiveness, conversion, strength, consolation, and sanctification, is the grace of Jesus Christ!

IV. Since it is only through the influence of the Holy Spirit that men are converted and sanctified, and since the work of conversion and sanctification is plainly attributed to the power of the Son, as well as to that of the Father, it can be no matter of surprise that this Holy Spirit, which is usually described as the Spirit of God, is also called the *Spirit of Christ:* Rom. viii. 9; 1 Pet. i. 11. It is not, however, in the work of grace alone that we trace the divine operations of the Spirit of our Redeemer: for Jesus Christ, in his reign, is also the author of those especial endowments, which are usually denominated *spiritual gifts.* It was Jesus who bestowed upon his disciples "power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease;" (Matt. x. 1;) and we have already ascertained, on the plain evidence of Scripture, that, as all the miracles of the earliest Christian teachers were wrought in the

name of Jesus, so it was by *him*, in union with the Father, that these wonderful changes in the order of nature were actually effected. We find that it was "Christ" who wrought by the apostle Paul, "*to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum*," he "*fully preached the Gospel of Christ*:" Rom. xv. 18, 19.

Christ is the "power" and the "wisdom of God;" (1 Cor. i. 24;) in him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" (Col. ii. 3;) "*by him*," his servants are "*enriched in all utterance, and in all knowledge*;" (1 Cor. i. 5;) and thus it is evident that Jesus Christ, who wrought the miracles of his apostles, was also the *inspirer of their ministry*. Such a doctrine may, indeed, be correctly deduced, not only from the frequent confessions of the apostle Paul, who traced all his own spiritual powers to the will and influence of the Son of God; but also from the history of the great day of Pentecost, as it is recorded in the book of Acts; for it is indisputable, that the celestial influence, by which the disciples were then enabled "to speak with other tongues," and to prophesy in the name of the Lord, was shed forth upon them by the glorified Messiah: Acts ii. 33. Thus, also, when the Lord Jesus was instructing his apostles in what manner they were to conduct themselves during those turbulent times which, after his own ascension, were so soon to overtake them, he said, "Settle, therefore, in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer, for *I will give you a mouth and wisdom*, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist:" Luke xxi. 14, 15.

Whatsoever, indeed, were the offices which the servants of Christ were called upon to bear in the early Christian church, (and these offices were manifold,) it was from Christ that they received their appointment; it was from Christ that they derived the powers which enabled them to fulfil it. "He that descended," says the apostle, "is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might

fill all things; and he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ .... "*from whom* the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love:" Eph. iv. 10—16.

V. Although the reign of Jesus Christ is of a strictly spiritual nature, yet, in order to the accomplishment of those ends to which the economy of grace is directed, we learn from Scripture, that outward circumstances are placed under his controul, and are regulated by his providence. From various passages in the book of Acts, and in the Epistles, it clearly appears, that the external movements and situations, as well as the spiritual callings, of the early disciples, depended on the will of Jesus. He assigned to the apostles, for example, not only their peculiar gifts, but their respective fields of labour. Thus, we read, that when Paul and Silas essayed to go into Bithynia, the *Spirit of Jesus* suffered them not: Acts xvi. 7. (*Griesbach's text.*) It was the will of Christ that their labours should be directed to another district. Paul, indeed, was well aware that all his travels were ordered by the providence, and were subject to the direction, of Jesus. "I will come to you shortly," said he to the Corinthians, "*if the Lord will;*" (1 Cor. iv. 19; *comp.* v. 4, 5, 17;) and again, "I trust to tarry awhile with you, if the Lord permit;" (1 Cor. xvi. 7; *comp.* v. 10; xv. 57, 58:) in both which passages it is clear, from the context, that by the title "Lord," he designated the Lord Jesus. To the Philippians the same apostle says, "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you .... but I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly:" Phil. ii. 19, 24. Lastly, to the Thessalonians he thus expresses himself, "Now God himself, and our Father, and our *Lord Jesus Christ*, direct our way to you:" 1 Thess. iii. 11.

Additional light is thrown upon this point of our

subject, by the messages of Christ, in the Revelation, to the angels of the seven Asiatic churches; for there are various parts of these divine communications which afford an evidence, that, even in matters of an external nature, these Christian communities were subject to the retributive government, and depended on the protecting providence of the Messiah: *see* Rev. ii. 5, 16, 22, 23, 24; iii. 3, 9, 10. But although the providence of Jesus Christ, in his reign of glory, may be ever especially directed to the edification and government of his peculiar people, yet it is far indeed from being confined within the limits of the church itself. That it is yet infinitely more extensive may be fairly deduced from the doctrine advanced in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that it is the Son of God who "*upholdeth all things by the word of his power*,"[3] (Heb. i. 3;) and, in the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul declares that "*by* (or *in*) *him all things consist*:"[4] Col. i. 17. There is nothing in the apostle's context which imposes any limit on the meaning of these comprehensive expressions; on the contrary, they are, in both instances, introduced in immediate connexion with the declaration, *that by the Son of God the worlds were created.* It must, therefore, I think, be allowed, that, within a very short compass, they contain a sublime description of that divine nature which maintains all things, visible and invisible, in their right order—which fills, supports, and animates, created things—which controuls and regulates the universe of God.

VI. Since Jesus Christ, in his reign, rules over the church, and over all the creatures of God—since he exercises, over the souls of men, a moral and spiritual government—since he converts and pardons the sinner, and sanctifies the believer—since he dispenses those personal endowments by the use of which the church is edified—and since he regulates not only the church, but even the universe by his providence,—it appears to follow, as a necessary consequence, that he is a

[3] φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ.
[4] τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκε.

proper object of prayer, glorification, and all devout affiance and allegiance. Now, the inference, which I thus venture to deduce from our premises, is distinctly supported by various passages in the New Testament. We have scriptural authority for asserting that the earliest Christians were distinguished as a peculiar people, by this very circumstance—*that they were accustomed to call on the name of Jesus.* When Ananias was pleading with our Lord, respecting the newly-converted Paul, he said, "Here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all *that call on thy name;*" (Acts ix. 14;) by which significant expression he obviously intended to describe *all the Christians* of the place or district. The same terms are adopted by Paul himself, who addresses his first Epistle to the Corinthians, not only to the church of Corinth, but to *all* the Christians—"*to all that, in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:*" i. 2. So also, Rom. x. 9—14: 2 Tim. ii. 22. Now, since the phrase rendered *to call upon the name of* a person is frequently employed in the Greek Scriptures, (especially in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament,) and uniformly signifies to *offer up prayers* to that person, and thus to invoke his assistance—since, indeed, the words admit of no other fair interpretation[5]—the passages now cited afford an evidence, incidental indeed, but not on that account the less irresistible, that it was the custom

[5] ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸ ὄνομα, *To call upon the name: vide Trommii Conc. Sept. Ver. O. T., Schmidii Conc. N. T., Schleusner in voc., Grotii Com., Rosenmülleri Schol. in locos citatos, &c.* I conceive, that ἐπικαλεῖσθαι, in this phrase, is used according to the true theory of the middle verb; and signifies, *to invoke God on one's own account.* Had the verb been passive, we should probably have read τῷ ὀνόματι rather than τὸ ὄνομα, as in *Sept. Esa.* xliii. 7. Pliny the Younger, in his celebrated letter to Trajan, (circa A. D. 110) informs the Emperor, that the Christians of Bithynia were accustomed to sing hymns to Christ as to a God—"*quod essent soliti ante lucem convenire, carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem:*" lib. x. ep. 97.

of the apostles and their followers to offer up their prayers to *Jesus Christ, the king of glory.*

As the earliest Christians received, from the circumstance of their praying to Jesus Christ, what may be regarded as one of their *distinctive denominations*, so are there recorded, in the Acts and the Epistles, certain plain instances of their practising this duty.

Soon after the ascension of our Lord, his disciples assembled together in order to appoint an apostle in the room of Judas; and having selected Joseph and Matthias, from those who had companied with them all the time that the *Lord Jesus* went in and out amongst them, "they prayed, and said, *Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place:*" Acts i. 21—25. Now, since the disciples had so lately been beholding the glorious ascension of their master —since, *while he was ascending*, they had already been engaged in worshipping him—since, in the context of this passage, as well as in the book of Acts *generally*, the title of Lord is appropriated to Jesus—and since the choice of the apostles plainly belonged to his peculiar office in the Christian economy, (John xv. 16; Eph. iv. 11)—it seems a reasonable and almost inevitable inference, that this prayer was addressed to the Son of God.

We read that Stephen, when on the point of martyrdom, saw "the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God;" and while his persecutors were stoning him, he prayed, saying,[6]—"*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit; and he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge:*" Acts vii. 56—60.

When, in their epistolatory salutations, the apostles invoked the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ on the

[6] Greek ἐπικαλούμενον καὶ λέγοντα. *Vide Schleusner in voc. No.* 5. Our Translators have rendered these words "calling upon *God* and saying;" but there is nothing in the Greek Text which corresponds with the word *God*. It was indisputably *Jesus, the Son of God*, whom the martyr then invoked.

churches which they were addressing, they virtually called upon his name, and *made him the object of their prayers: see* Rom. i. 7: 2 John 3: Rev. xxii. 21, &c. Lastly, of his own prayers to Christ, the apostle Paul, in particular, has related a defined and memorable instance. "There was given to me," says he to the Corinthians, "a thorn in the flesh; the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.* And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of CHRIST may rest upon me:" 2 Cor. xii. 7—9.

Such was the practice of the apostles, and other early disciples of the Lord Jesus—to their risen and glorified Master, they did not hesitate to address their petitions. And such also was their doctrine, as appears to be evinced by the following passage of the first Epistle of John: "These things," says the apostle, to the catholic church, "have I written unto you that believe on the name of the *Son of God*, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the *Son of God*. And this is the confidence that we have in HIM, that, *if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him:*" 1 John v. 13—15.[7]

Finally, it is the Lamb, before whom, in the Revelation, the four living creatures, and the four-and-twenty elders are represented, by the same apostle, as falling down in the act of worship, "having every one of them harps, and golden phials full of odours, which are *the prayers of saints:*" Rev. v. 8.[8]

[7] Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ παῤῥησία ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς αὐτὸν, ὅτι ἐάν τι αἰτώμεθα κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ, ἀκούει ἡμῶν· καὶ ἐὰν οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἀκούει ἡμῶν, ὃ ἐὰν αἰτώμεθα, οἴδαμεν, ὅτι ἔχομεν τὰ αἰτήματα ἃ ἠτήκαμεν παῤ' αὐτοῦ.

[8] I have reason to believe, that pious and orthodox Christians have sometimes been discouraged from offering up their petitions to the

As Jesus Christ, in his reign, is a proper object of prayer, so is he also to be worshipped with *praise, thanksgiving, and glorification. To him* we are commanded "to sing, and make melody," in our "hearts:" Eph. v. 19, 20: *comp.* 22, 23. The apostles regarded their Saviour as the *Lord of Glory;* (1 Cor. ii. 8; James ii. 1;) and, therefore, in the very words which, on other occasions, they applied to the Father, they did not hesitate to ascribe to him "glory for ever and ever;" (2 Tim. iv. 18; Heb. xiii. 21;) "praise and dominion for ever and ever: 1 Pet. iv. 11: *comp.* Gal. i. 5: 1 Pet. v. 11, &c. But the glorification of

omnipresent Redeemer of men, by our common English version of John xvi. 22, 23. "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day *ye shall ask me nothing.* Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you." Now, the original of verse 23 is as follows: Καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἐρωτήσετε οὐδέν..... ὅσα ἂν αἰτήσητε τὸν Πατέρα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, δώσει ὑμῖν; and a slight inspection of the Greek terms here employed, will, I believe, suffice to remove the apparent difficulty. The distinction between αἰτέομαι and ἐρωτάω is lost in our version, but it is nevertheless very important.—Αἰτέομαι is "I ask," in the sense of "I pray." Ἐρωτάω, though capable of the same meaning, more commonly signifies, "*I ask questions;*" and the true version of the passage I conceive to be, "And in that day ye shall ask me no questions. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall request of the Father in my name, he shall give it you." That ἐρωτήσετε here signifies, "ye shall *ask questions,*" is amply evinced by the context; for the whole of our Lord's doctrine, on this occasion, was an answer to the *questionings* of his disciples, *(see* ver. 17); and his discourse is introduced in verse 19, as follows:—"Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to *ask* him"—ἐρωτᾶν αὐτόν. After the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the apostles were to be themselves more fully illuminated. They were to have no more questions to ask of their Master. In answer to their prayers in his name, they were to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and this gift was to be all-sufficient for their information and direction: *so Schleusner, Rosenmüller, Kuinoel, Whitby, &c.*

Christ is a duty which is far indeed from being confined to the militant church on earth. The innumerable company of angels praise him, and *all creation* hallows him. "And I beheld," says the apostle John in the Revelation, "and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and *unto the Lamb*, for ever and ever:" Rev. v. 11—13.

Such are the scriptural evidences, from which we learn, that prayers, praises, and thanksgivings, are rightly addressed to the Son as well as to the Father. But the worship of Jesus Christ, in his reign, is by no means restricted to these spiritual offerings. He is also the object of that practical service and allegiance, of that fixed reliance of soul, and of all those humble and devoted dispositions, which divine authority, wisdom, and love, must ever demand at the hands of frail and dependent man.

The apostles frequently introduced themselves to our notice as the *servants* of Jesus Christ; and, the Greek substantive, which we render "*servants*," designated them as the actual property of their Master—as persons absolutely subject to his sovereign disposal.[9] Their spiritual allegiance to the Son of God, and their unqualified reliance on his providence and power, were indeed manifested by their whole conduct. In his name they called to repentance, proclaimed remission of sins, wrought miracles, and performed all the other functions of their apostolic office; and, for his sake, they cheerfully submitted to a life of the severest labour, privation, trial, and persecution. They gloried

[9] δοῦλοι.

in their infirmities, and rejoiced in their sufferings, for the love of Jesus: 2 Cor. xii. 9; 1 Pet. iv. 14.

When Paul was besought by his friends not to go up to Jerusalem, he answered, "What mean ye, to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus:" Acts xxi. 13. That apostle was indeed an eminent example of Christian zeal and dedication. A brand plucked from the burning—a sinner saved by the peculiar interposition of divine grace—he was, in all his subsequent conduct, powerfully actuated by faith, and love, and loyalty towards Jesus, the Holy One of Israel. His extraordinary talents, gifts, and energies, were all directed, as a mighty stream, into one channel. He gives up all for Christ: he delights in a conformity to his sufferings; (Rom. v. 3; Phil. iii. 10;) he lives in the power, moves under the guidance, and glories in the cross, of Jesus. Every page which he writes teems with allusions to his Saviour; every thought brings Christ to his remembrance; and no sooner does that holy name drop from the apostle's pen, than all secondary subjects yield to the praise of redeeming love. To "me," he cries, "to live is Christ, to die is gain:" Phil. i. 21. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me:" Gal. ii. 20. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ:" Phil. iii. 7, 8.

The services of this admirable individual, and of the other apostles of our Lord, were indeed of a very peculiar nature; but it is plain from their *doctrine*, that the spirit in which those services were performed, is that to which every Christian is bound to aspire. Christians are not their own: they are "Christ's;" they are "bought with a price;" they are become his "purchased possession;" (1 Cor. iii. 23; vi. 19, 20;

Eph. i. 14;) and, therefore, to him, and to the Father *by him*, are all their service and allegiance due. Since he is the good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep; (John x. 11;) the Shepherd and Bishop of souls; (1 Pet. ii. 25;) the chief Shepherd; (1 Pet. v. 4;) it is our unquestionable duty to live in his *fear;* (Eph. v. 21, *Griesbach's text;*[1]) to obey his voice; (John x. 27;) to follow him whithersoever he goeth; (Rev. xiv. 4;) and to do *all things* in subjection to his will, and with reference to his authority and approbation. "*Whatsoever* ye do in word or deed," says the apostle to the Colossians, "do *all* in the *name of the Lord Jesus*, giving thanks to God and the Father by him ..... Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and *not unto men*, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the LORD CHRIST:" Col. iii. 17—24.

The sentiment embodied in these precepts may be said to pervade the whole Epistles of Paul, who has recorded an express *judgment*, "that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again:" 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. In the numerous injunctions which are in these writings addressed to children, parents, husbands, wives, servants, and subjects, obedience to the will of Christ is held up as the great motive and principle of Christian conduct; and even in matters of a comparatively unimportant nature, the same rule is virtually prescribed: "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end CHRIST both died and rose, and revived, that he

1. Eph. v. 21. Ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ.

might be LORD both of the dead and living:" Rom. xiv. 6—9.

On the whole, therefore, it is evident, that a real devotion of heart to the Lord Jesus Christ is a main distinguishing characteristic of all true Christians. While they agree in this great principle of their religion, they will not be separated from one another by merely circumstantial differences. With them "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free, but CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL:" Col. iii. 11.

Abundant evidence has now been adduced from Scripture, to prove that the reign of Jesus Christ is eternal in its duration, absolute in its authority, extending over all creatures, spiritual in its nature, and perfectly moral in its results—that divine providence and grace are the means by which it is conducted—that Christ, in his regal capacity, is the unfailing source of those celestial influences by which the human heart is renovated and purified, and the church on earth maintained—and that he is a proper object of religious worship and all devout allegiance. Now, from the whole of this statement, we may surely deduce, as a sound and necessary consequence, the actual divinity of the Lord Jesus. The most practical notions which we are capable of entertaining respecting the divine nature are here exhibited as belonging to the person and character of our Saviour. Were it required of us to describe the God whom we serve, should we not say, that he is a being who exercises an endless, unlimited, absolute dominion over the church, and over all creatures—that to him we are responsible for all our actions—that he is the ever-present helper and protector of his people, the disposer of events, the author of all our spiritual gifts and graces, the object of prayer and all manner of true religious worship—that he *upholdeth all things by the word of his power—that he filleth all in all—that by him all things consist?* Must we not allow that every particular of this description is applicable to God, and to God alone? Yet the whole of it is applied to Jesus Christ

in his reign; and hence we justly draw the conclusion, that Jesus Christ, in his reign, is GOD.

In this conclusion we are satisfactorily confirmed, by a comparison of the doctrine of the New, with that of the Old Testament: it being certain that these two constituent parts of Holy Writ reveal to us, in its true order and harmony, a single scheme of true religion: for although true religion may be gradually unfolded, and may, in its nature, be progressive, yet, in its most substantial characteristics, it is always the same. Now, in the Old Testament, *Jehovah alone* is ever declared to be the supreme Lord and Lawgiver, the omnipresent Protector, the Shepherd, the Husband, and the Redeemer, of his people. In the New Testament, all these gracious offices are described as the offices of the Son of God, and as attaching, in a very peculiar manner, to his relative position in that divine system of grace, which, although it was partially understood under the dispensation of the law, is fully brought to light only by the gospel. Again, in the New Testament, an ample authority is given to us for our exercising towards the Son of God, those duties of prayer, glorification, and spiritual affiance and allegiance, which, in the Old Testament, are emphatically restricted to that Being, who said, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God:" Exod. xx. 5. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve:" Matt. iv. 10; *comp.* Deut. vi. 13, &c.

If, then, we allow that there is an uniformity in divine truth—that the essential principles of religion are unchangeable, and that the Holy Spirit can never contradict himself,—I cannot see a possible alternative which will not involve our also allowing, that Jesus Christ participates in the divine nature—that he is truly comprised in that one glorious ELOHIM, whom the prophets represent as the Almighty Governor and Deliverer of his people, and who is the only proper object of spiritual service, and of all religious adoration.

Before we proceed to the consideration of the yet more direct evidences of the deity of Christ in his

reign, it will be desirable that our attention should be, for a short time, directed to that particular period of it, when the moral government of the Messiah will be fully developed, and the great scheme of his operations completed, by the *final and universal judgment of mankind*. This awful and glorious period of the reign of Christ is in Scripture usually denominated "the day of *the Lord*," probably, because the *Lord Jesus* will then be seen to "come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory;" (Matt. xxiv. 27, 30;) will gather together "his elect" on the one hand, and "them which do iniquity" on the other. (Matt. xiii. 41; xxiv. 31;) will set them in array before him; and "will render to every man according to his deeds;" *vide* Rom. ii. 6: *comp.* xiv. 10; 1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Cor. i. 14; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10.

In endeavouring to trace the nature and character of the Messiah, in connexion with this great day of account, I must remark, in the first place, that Jesus Christ, the Judge, is still to be regarded as the *Mediator between God and man*. As God has redeemed, and governs, so he will judge, the world, *through* Christ; and it is from the Father, that the Son, in his capacity of Mediator, receives his judicial authority. Such is the express testimony of Jesus himself, who has said, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath *committed* all judgment unto the Son:" John v. 22.

Such a mode of statement is perfectly analogous to the doctrine already considered, of the derivation of our Lord's mediatorial authority, and of his subjection, even during his reign of glory, to God the Father Almighty; nor can it excite, in the attentive reader of Scripture, any degree of surprise, since the human nature of the Mediator is expressly recognized by the inspired writers, in reference to the period of final judgment, as well as in connexion with his reign in general—"(God) hath appointed a day," said the apostle Paul to his Athenian audience, "in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that MAN whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead:" Acts xvii. 31. Nor is it only a bare

recognition of the human nature of our appointed Judge that we find in the records of Scripture: we also learn from them, that this constituent of our Lord's mediatorial character is of a very especial importance to his judicial office; for Christ himself has assured us, that "(the Father) hath given him authority to execute judgment also, *because* he is the *Son of man*:" John v. 27. Wonderful, indeed, are both the equity and the love which God hath manifested, in ordaining that his rational children shall be judged by a Person who, in one point of view, is their *brother* and their *peer*—who himself died for their sins—who is filled with the tenderest sympathy towards his followers, having been himself tempted—and in whose robe of righteousness all those who have kept the faith once delivered to the saints shall find in that day (however unworthy) a sure and sufficient protection.

Such are the consolatory reflections suggested by the doctrine, that Jesus Christ, the Judge of all flesh, is *man;* but these reflections would cease to afford us any hope or encouragement, did we regard him in this point of view *alone;* for were he man *only*, where would be his capacity to execute his commission? where would be his power to carry into effect either the sentence of his wrath, or the purposes of his love? Now, we learn from Scripture, that the great day of the Lord will be distinguished by certain acts of unspeakable magnitude and importance; and if we find, on the one hand, that these acts are truly divine, such as God alone can be regarded as performing —and, on the other hand, that they are severally attributed to Jesus Christ, it is plain that, from such premises, we may again legitimately deduce the doctrine of his deity.

1. The first of these acts is, *the changing of the quick, and the raising of the dead to life.* This future event is frequently alluded to in the New Testament, and is described by the sacred writers, as destined to form one of the essential circumstances of the last day. On that day, when the "trumpet shall sound," the earth and the sea shall be opened, and the dead

of all generations, an inconceivable multitude which no man can number, of every kindred, and tongue, and people, shall be raised, and shall stand before the throne, and the living shall be changed; and to all shall be given a spiritual body—and so this "corruption" shall put on "incorruption," and this "mortal," "immortality:" and the saying be brought to pass that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory:" *see* 1 Cor. xv: Rev. xx. 13.

Such are the declarations of Scripture respecting the transmutation and resurrection of mankind in the last day: and what must be the power by which this most marvellous effect will be produced? Were it required of us to conceive an event by which should be indicated, in the most distinct conceivable manner, the omnipotence of the Supreme Being, it would be difficult to raise our ideas to any thing of greater sublimity than this new creation and perfect change of a boundless multitude of beings, in a *moment*—"in the twinkling of an eye." If that omnipotence is indeed clearly manifested in the formation of our natural bodies, and of all those minute and exactly adapted organs, by means of which our present life is maintained, how much more conspicuously will it be displayed, in the production of an incalculable number of spiritual bodies, refined in the highest degree, and fitted to be the clothing of immortal souls for ever? "God," it is said, "hath both raised up the Lord (Jesus) and will also raise up us *by his own power:*" 1 Cor. vi. 14.

Now, this stupendous act, which will one day afford so admirable a proof of the power of God—the power to which it is so plainly ascribed by the apostle—is, in other passages of Scripture, with equal clearness attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ. "The hour is coming, and now is," said Jesus himself, "when the dead shall hear the voice of the SON OF God, and they that hear shall live.....the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear *his* voice, and shall come forth:" John v. 25, 29. Again, "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that, of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but

should *raise it up again at the last day*. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have everlasting life, and *I will raise him up at the last day*:" vi. 39, 40: *comp.* 54: xi. 25.

It is by the resurrection of the dead that death (in the apostle's metaphorical language) will "be swallowed up in victory;" (1 Cor. xv. 54) and it is Jesus who obtains this victory; "For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet:" and "the *last enemy* that shall be destroyed is *death*:" ver. 25, 26.

Lastly, it is true, in relation to the resurrection of the body, as well as in a more exalted sense, that "as in Adam all die, so *in Christ* shall all be *made alive*;" (ver. 22) and the apostle who states this doctrine, has elsewhere expressly assured us that the change which will finally assimilate the Christian to his glorified Redeemer will be wrought upon us by the Lord Jesus himself. "For our conversation," says he to the Philippians, "is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, *who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the* working *whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself*:" Phil. iii. 20, 21.

II. The second great act, which will distinguish the last day, is the *destruction of the visible world*. "By the word of God," says the apostle Peter, "the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men..... The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up:" 2 Pet. iii. 5—10. The same event is probably the principal subject alluded to by Isaiah, when, in describing the day of the *indignation of Je-*

hovah upon all nations, he prophecies that "all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host shall fall down as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree:" xxxiv. 4. In the Revelation, the *earth and the heaven* are prophetically represented as *fleeing away* from before the face of him who will sit on the "great white throne," as the judge of all mankind; (xx. 11) and our Lord himself has declared that, on the day of his glorious coming, "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken:" Mark xiii. 24, 25.

Although a certain degree of obscurity necessarily attaches to these prophecies, and although we can form no exact idea under what precise circumstances, or to what extent, this destruction of visible things will take place; or, indeed, whether it will be, to any extent, an annihilation of them, or (as appears most probable) only a total change and purification;—yet, on a general view of the subject, it will, I presume, be freely allowed, that the act which will thus display the indignation, and consummate the purposes, of Jehovah, will be the act of God himself. To Jehovah it is virtually attributed in some of the passages now cited; and, on the whole, the Power who caused the visible world, in its present form and nature, *to be*, may safely be regarded as the only Power who can revoke the sentence, and cause it *not to be*.

Now, in a remarkable passage of Scripture, which, for another purpose, has been cited in a former part of the essay, this act is ascribed to the Son as its author, and ascribed to him on the express principle that he is himself Jehovah: "Unto THE SON [the Scripture or the Psalmist] saith, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands: They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; *and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed;* but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail:" Heb. i. 8—

12: *comp.* Psalm cii. 25, &c. The same doctrine may be fairly deduced from Heb. xii. 25—27; and Rev. xx. 11.

III. Lastly, in the *judgment itself*, and in the retributive dispensations by which it will be followed, (as they are prophetically described in Scripture) it seems impossible not to trace the real divinity of Jesus Christ, the Judge. For, in the first place, the very fact that he is the moral governor of the world, to whom we are responsible for the use of all our endowments, both rational and spiritual, and to whom, in that day, we shall render an account of them, appears to be capable of no satisfactory explanation, on any other principle than this—that he is truly God; *one* with Him who created, and who possesses, all things. And, secondly, when Jesus Christ is described as judging all mankind for "the things done in the body," (Matt. xxv. 32; 2 Cor. v. 10) he is represented as acting in the character of an omniscient Being. We may conclude that, by *the things done in the body*, are intended, not only overt words and actions, but the secret desires and imaginations of the heart, to which the laws and sanctions of a spiritual religion must ever be understood, and in the New Testament are clearly described, as extending; and hence it appears, that, in order to receive the general account to be rendered in that awful day, and to judge the righteous judgment accordingly, our Lord must perfectly know, and exactly appreciate, all the actions, words, thoughts, and intentions, of all men ever born into the world. *It is he* "*who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart:*" 1 Cor. iv. 5: *comp.* Matt. xii. 36. Now, for such a knowledge, and such an appreciation, what, on the principles either of reason or of Scripture, can for a moment be imagined to suffice, but the infinite capacities of the mind of God?[2]

[2] "Verily, I say unto you," said Jesus to his apostles, "that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye shall *also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel:*" Matt. xix. 28.

As, in judging all mankind, the Lord Jesus will display a conspicuous proof of his omniscience, so, in the dispensing of those eternal rewards and punishments, which are represented as the results of his judgment, he will manifest, with equal clearness, the *authority and power* of deity. Such authority and power must surely be regarded as essentially belonging to that glorified Person who will "*give*" to them that overcome, "to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God;" (Rev. ii. 7) who will *give* "unto all them that love his appearing" "a crown of righteousness;" (2 Tim. iv. 8) who will "*give*" to his faithful and obedient followers "eternal

comp. Luke xxii. 28—30. From this passage many persons conclude that, when the Son of man shall appear in his glory, in order to judge the world, his twelve apostles will be his *assessors;* and if this be in truth the doctrine here promulgated, it must necessarily be understood in such a subordinate sense as will consist with a just view of those limits which the faculties of man can never pass, and also with our Lord's declaration, that the Father hath committed "*all* judgment" to the Son. Other critics, however, suppose, that nothing more is here intended than that the apostles, in that great day of account, shall be exalted to a preeminent degree of power and glory. "*Præcipua præ reliquis Judæis omnibus felicitate et dignitate fruemini*"..... Simili modo κρίνειν apud Græcos *imperare*, ἄρχειν, notat, teste Artemidoro, ii. c. 12: *Schleusner, Lex. in voc.*, κρίνω, *No.* 5. *See also Rosenmüller, Kuinoel, and Ad. Clarke in loc., &c.* A similar meaning is attributed by Schleusner to the apostle Paul, when he declares to the Corinthians, that "the saints shall judge the world," (1 Cor. vi. 2); but, since the subject, on which the apostle is there treating, is that of human law, and merely temporal judgment, he may be rather understood as declaring, that, as true Christianity spreads in the world, the saints will possess even *a civil power over other men.* The apostle might, probably, have in his view the prophecy of Daniel—that "the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the *saints* of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him:" vii. 27.

life;" (John x. 28) and at whose bidding, on the other hand, "his angels," who stand before his throne, "shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth:" Matt. xiii. 41, 42.

Here, in further support of our argument, we may again adduce the comparative doctrine of the Old and New Testaments. In the former, God is presented to our attention in the capacity of a Judge. He is described as the *only* Being who is capable of forming a perfect estimate of the thoughts, the conduct, and the character, of men; as the *only* moral governor of the universe; as the *only* giver of every celestial blessing bestowed on the righteous; as the *only* avenger, who shall finally pour forth his fiery indignation on the wicked and disobedient: and not unfrequently is *Jehovah* depicted, in the language of prophecy, as visibly coming into the world, with awful circumstances of solemnity and glory, in order to deliver his people, and to judge mankind: *see* Psalm xcvi, xcvii, xcviii: Isa. xxxiv. 2—8; lxiii. 1—4: Joel iii. 12—16, &c. From the New Testament, on the other hand, we learn that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed *all judgment* unto the Son;" (John v. 22) that the Son, as well as the Father, searches the hearts, and weighs the actions, of men—that it is he to whom the account of all our deeds must be finally rendered—that it is he who will come into the world with power and great glory, for the final redemption of believers, and for the great purpose of universal retribution—that it is he who will bestow on the righteous the gift of eternal blessedness, and who will consign the impenitent sinner to everlasting punishment. Hence, therefore, on the principle that divine truth is uniform and unchangeable, we are once more confirmed in our conclusion, that Jesus Christ, the Judge of all flesh, is GOD: *comp.* Isa. xxxiv. 2—8, and lxiii. 1—4, with Rev. vi. 12—17, and xix. 11—16; and Isa. xlv. 22—25, with Rom. xiv. 10, 11: Phil. ii. 10.

Having thus surveyed some of the principal particulars in which Jesus Christ, during his reign

of glory, exercises the attributes of the Supreme Being, we may proceed to a brief examination of several passages of Holy Writ, in which, with reference to this portion of his revealed history, he is described by the *divine names*.

The first passage which claims our attention, in relation to this point of our argument, forms a part of the prophecies of Jeremiah—"Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch; and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice (or righteousness) in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS:" chap. xxiii. 5, 6. That this passage contains a prediction of the coming of Christ, is abundantly evident from its internal characteristics; for, were we required to describe the Messiah as he was expected by the ancient Jews, and as he is represented in the *general* strain of Hebrew prophecy, we could scarcely express ourselves with greater point and precision than by saying, that he was to be the descendant of David, a righteous branch, a king who should reign and prosper—who should execute judgment and justice in the earth—and who should deliver his people from all their enemies. Accordingly, it is not by Christian commentators only, but by Jonathan the Targumist, and by the Jews in general, both ancient and modern, that this prophecy is explained as relating to the Messiah.[3] It appears, then, that the name of the Messiah was to be called *Jehovah our righteousness*.

Now, it is possible that the term Jehovah might so form a part of a Hebrew *proper name* of a person, as to throw some light on his history and circumstances without involving the notion that the individual so

[3] In support of this assertion, the learned Gill cites the following authorities:—*Bava Bathra*, fol. lxxv. 2; *Echa Rabbati*, fol. l. 1; *R. Saadiah Gaon* in Dan. vii. 13; *R. Abo Sepher Ikkarim*, lib. ii. c. 28; *Abarbinel Mahmiah Jeshuah*, fol. xxxv. 2; *Caphtor*, fol. lxxvii. 1; *Yalkut Simeoni*. par. ii. fol. lxxv. 2; *Kimchi, and Ben Melech in loc.*

named was himself Jehovah; and, although the Bible affords no instance of any such name of a person, the manner in which it might have so happened will be rendered intelligible to the reader by the name given to certain places and things. Thus, Abraham called the name of the place where the angel of God had appeared to him, *Jehovah Jireh*, because the Lord was seen there, (Gen. xxii. 14) and Moses built an altar, and named it *Jehovah-nissi* because the Lord was his protector in battle: Exod. xvii. 15. Accordingly, the Jews would persuade us that the name Jehovah-Tsidkenu, is here given to the Messiah, simply because, in his days, or by his instrumentality, the righteous purposes of God were to be accomplished: *see Targ. Jon. in loc.* This gloss, however, when tried by the rules of fair criticism, and by the light of the *New Testament*, (for our present argument is addressed not to Jews, but to Christians) will not be found to bear the test of examination.

Jehovah-Tsidkenu was not the *proper name* of Jesus Christ; and, therefore, when we read that his name was thus to be called, we are to understand simply that the nature, character, and office, imported by this title, were to be *his* nature, character, and office; or, in other words, that he was actually *to be* Jehovah our Righteousness. Now, this view of the subject, which is supported (as has been already observed in reference to Isa. vii. 14) by the known idiom of the Hebrew tongue, is plainly confirmed by collateral considerations. That the latter clause of the title (Tsidkenu,—our Righteousness) is *personally* descriptive of the Messiah, is apparent from the context; for he is immediately before denominated the *righteous* branch, or the branch of *righteousness;* and is described as the person who was to execute judgment and *righteousness* in the earth; and not only from the context, but from the doctrine conveyed in the expression itself; for, while righteousness, in its absolute sense, is ascribed indifferently to the Father and to the Son, we clearly learn from the New Testament, that to be "*our righteousness*" is one of the characteristic and distinguishing offices of the latter—

of that Redeemer who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. Christ is made unto us of God, "wisdom, and *righteousness*, and sanctification, and redemption:" 1 Cor. i. 30. He "is the end of the law for *righteousness*, to every one that believeth:" Rom. x. 4. He was made "sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the *righteousness of God in him:*" 2 Cor. v. 21. Now, it is evident that the two parts of this remarkable title are placed in grammatical apposition to each other, and are descriptive of one and the same person. He that is *our righteousness* is also *Jehovah*. Hence, therefore, it follows, that Jesus Christ, whose glorious reign over his own church is so clearly proclaimed in this celebrated prophecy, is himself JEHOVAH.[4]

[4] Jer. xxiii. 6..... וזה שמו אשר יקראו "And this is the name whereby he *shall be called*; or, more literally, by which *one shall call him.*" A similar indefinite use of the verb קרא repeatedly occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures: *vide* Jud. i. 17: 2 Sam. ii. 16: Isa. ix. 6. Or we may understand "Israel" as the governing substantive to the verb יקרא; for it is the church by whom Christ is denominated the *Lord our Righteousness.* "Hoc nomen ejus est, quo vocabit eum *Israel,*" Junius et Tremell. "Quo vocabit eum *unusquisque*" Piscator. Or again, יקראו may be rendered as a plural verb, "*vocabunt* (eum)." So *Vulg. Targ. Syr. Arab.* The Septuagint Translator *understands* "*Jehovah*" as the nominative to the verb, and renders καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ὃ καλέσει Κύριος, Ἰωσεδεκ. "And this is the name by which the Lord shall call him, Josedek, i. e *Jehovah-Righteousness.* It is, however, abhorrent from the plain dictates of truth, to introduce the Supreme Being as classing himself with his creatures, and as denominating the Messiah, "*our* righteousness;" and the Septuagint Translators have avoided this difficulty only by cutting off from the name Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the particle נו *our.*

This remarkable prophecy is repeated in Jer. xxxiii. 15, 16; and there, according to our common English version, the name of *Jehovah-Tsidkenu* is ascribed to Jerusalem, or to the church of which Christ is the Head. "This is the name whereby *she* shall be called, &c." If this interpretation is correct, it affords no

The prophecy which we have now been considering remarkably accords with a well-known passage of the Psalms. "My heart," says the Psalmist, "is inditing a good matter! I speak of the things which I have made touching the *King*: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever! Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows:" xlv. 1—7.

The psalm, of which this passage forms the first division, is, like the *Canticles*, an epithalamium, or marriage-song—the former part of it being descriptive of the bridegroom, and the latter part, of the bride. Now, although in some of its subordinate particulars, this inspired poem may possibly apply to Solomon, or some other Jewish monarch, and his queen, its more important signification, as relating *to Christ and the church* is amply substantiated, *first*, by the judgment of the Jews themselves, who appear to be unanimous in explaining this passage as a prophecy of the Messiah;[5] *secondly*, by the sublime and sig-

proof whatever that the name, when applied to Jesus Christ, as a description of *his own person and character*, is not indicative of his real divinity; but it is most probable that our translators are here in error. The pronoun הִיא, which they render "she," may be regarded as the masculine, in the Chaldaic form; and is so rendered by the Targumist, as well as by the Syriac and Vulgate translators. In that case, this, as well as the former prophecy, applies only to the Messiah. In the Septuagint version, the prophecy is not repeated: *vide Michaelis and de Rossi in loc.*

[5] "Meir Arama ait consentire omnes Rabbinos hunc psalmum

nificant terms in which are here depicted the majesty, authority, and righteous sway, of Israel's spiritual monarch—a point in which this psalm precisely corresponds with many others of the evangelical prophecies; and *thirdly*, by the doctrine of the New Testament, which frequently presents our Saviour to us in the same character of the Bridegroom, or glorious Head and Husband of his own church: Matt. xxv. 5: John iii. 29: Ephes. v. 25: Rev. xix. &c.

Whatsoever doubt, however, might have attached to this subject, is removed by the apostle Paul, who, in his argument with the Hebrews, adduces this passage, not only as an acknowledged description of the Son of God, but as affording a proof of his superiority in *the divine nature*, over all the angels: Heb. i. 8. It is unquestionable, therefore, that, in this memorable prophecy, while the respective offices of the Father and the Son—of the Anointer and the Anointed—are plainly distinguished, the Son is himself addressed by the sacred name of God.[6]

De Messiâ loqui:" *Muis in Poli Syn. See also Scoetgen. Hor. Heb.* in Heb. i. 8, *and Targum in loc.*

[6] Psalm xlv. 7. כסאך אלהים עולם ועד, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;* Targum—"The throne of thy glory, O Jehovah, is established for ever:" Sept. Ὁ θρόνος σου, ὁ Θεὸς, εἰς αἰῶνα αἰῶνος, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." So *Syr. Œth. Vulg. Arab, Aquila, &c.* So also the Greek fathers: *vide Justin. dial. cum Tryph.* Ed. *Ben.* p. 152, D. *Irenæus contra Hær.*, lib. iii. c. 6, Ed. *Ben.*, p. 180, J. *Eusebius Dem. Evang. Athanasius ad Serap.* Ed. *Colon.* vol. i. 169, B. *Chrysostom, de Incomprehens. Dei Nat.* Ed. *Ben.*, tom. i. 483, E. The late Gilbert Wakefield, in contradiction to these and many other authorities, but, after the example of Grotius, has ventured to render this passage, "*God is thy throne for ever and ever.*" This strange version of the words of the Psalmist is evidently inadmissible: first, because the stress of the apostle's argument evidently depends on the fact, that the Son is here addressed by the name of God: and, secondly, because, in the Septuagint version of the passage, *(which is adopted by the apostle)* the article

That Jesus Christ, the Governor and Saviour of the church, in whom every[c] sincere Christian abides by faith, is the *true God*, is a doctrine explicitly declared by the apostle John, at the conclusion of his first Epistle. "We know," says the apostle, "that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know the True One; and we are in the True One, (even) in his Son Jesus Christ. *He is the true God and eternal life:*"[7] chap. v. 20. The train of ideas which this passage unfolds is very

before θρόνος precludes our explaining that substantive as the *predicate* instead of the *subject* of the proposition: *see Middleton Doctr. Gr. Art.* on Heb. i. 8. It is almost needless to remark, that ὁ Θεὸς is frequently used as a vocative.

[7] 1 John v. 20. Οἴδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἥκει, καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διάνοιαν, ἵνα γινώσκωμεν τὸν ἀληθινόν· καί ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ, ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς καὶ ἡ ζωὴ αἰώνιος. The common English version of this passage is as follows: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

Clarke, in his Scripture doctrine of the Trinity, (p. 54) has, with singular inaccuracy, asserted that the terms "true God," in 1 John v. 20, were understood by *all the ancients* as relating to the Father. My own search, in the works of the ancient ecclesiastical writers, for references to this passage, (a search greatly facilitated by the indexes of the Benedictine editions) has not supplied me with a single instance of such an interpretation. On the contrary, these words are quoted as relating to Jesus Christ, and are treated of as a proof of his divinity, by *Athanasius*, (Orat. I. *cont. Arianos*, Ed. *Colon.* i. 296); *Cyril. Alex.* (dial. viii. *quod unus sit Christus*, Ed. *Lutet.* vol. v. part 1, 713); *Hilary*, (*De Trin.* lib. vi); *Basil*, (*adv. Eunom.* lib. iv. Ed. *Ben.* i. 294); *Jerom*, (in Isa. lxv. 16); *Augustine*, (*De Trin.* lib. i. cap. 6); *Gregory Magnus*, (Ed. *Ben.* ii. p. 1169); *Œcumenius and Theophylact*, (*in loc.*) The great majority of modern commentators explain the passage in the same manner: *see, particularly, the admirable notes upon it of John Calvin and Whitby; also Glassii Phil. Sac. a Dath.* tom. i. p. 157.

intelligible. *The Son of God has come into the world, and has bestowed upon us a knowledge of the True One, that is, of the Father; and we not only know the Father, but actually are or dwell in him: and this is the consequence of our being or dwelling in the Son, because he is himself the True God and Eternal Life.*

That this simple paraphrase affords a clear and easy signification, cannot be denied; and that it is in perfect accordance with the declarations of the same apostle in his Gospel, respecting the deity of Jesus Christ, and his union with the Father, the impartial inquirer will not fail to allow. It is, however, a satisfactory circumstance, that the correctness of this interpretation, (as far as relates to the application to the Son of the terms *true God*) is clearly confirmed by critical considerations. For, in the first place, it is evident that the declaration of the Father's being the true God would here be simply tautologous—a mere repetition of a doctrine already supposed and stated. Secondly, according to the plainest principles of construction, the pronoun rendered *he*, can here be understood only of Jesus Christ, whose name is its immediate antecedent, and *who is, at the same time, the principal subject of the apostle's discourse.* And lastly, the title *eternal life*, in the language of the New Testament, and especially of this apostle, properly and peculiarly designates *the Son*, who has procured for us that celestial boon—who took our nature upon him, and died on the cross, that he might give "*life* unto the world." Jesus is the "*bread of life;*" (John vi. 48;) "the *word of life;*" (1 John i. 1;) "the resurrection, *and the life:*" John xi. 25. He, and he alone, as we are taught in the commencement of this very Epistle, is "that *eternal life*, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us:" chap. i. 2: *compare* v. 1: Col. iii. 3, 4. It follows, therefore, that Jesus Christ, in his reign, is the *true God;* and after promulgating this sacred truth, the apostle significantly adds, "*Little children, keep yourselves from idols:*" verse 21.

The manner in which the title *Lord* is, in the New Testament, applied to Jesus Christ has an important

bearing on the present subject. By the evangelists and apostles he is very frequently, and by way of eminence, denominated, *the Lord;* and the apostle Paul in particular, who has employed this term upwards of three hundred times, so *appropriates* it to our Saviour, as thereby to distinguish him from the Father on the one hand, and from all the creatures of God on the other. Now, although the substantive *Lord*, when used as a common appellative, may designate any person who rules over others, yet, when it is thus applied in an absolute manner, with a force closely assimilated to that of a *proper name*, it is usually understood to signify *God*. In the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, it constantly represents the Hebrew name *Jehovah*. It is well known that the Greek style of the writers of the New Testament was, in many respects, formed upon that of the Septuagint. The Scripture of that version was the Scripture which they read, and from which they generally quoted. Since, then, in the Septuagint, this very word *Lord* is the most frequent name of the Almighty—a name which could not fail to bring God to the remembrance of every Hellenistic Jew—it appears most probable, that the apostolic use of this title, as the name of Jesus Christ, was grounded on the doctrine of his real divinity.

That this was, in fact, the principle on which the apostle Paul so employed the title *Lord*, may indeed be concluded, not only from this general argument, but from the force of several particular passages in his writings. Thus, when, in speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, he commands servants to perform their duty "as *to the Lord and not to men;*" (Col. iii. 23, 24; Ephes. vi. 7;) this pointed antithesis between the *Lord* and *men* affords no obscure indication that, to the former term, the apostle attached the notion of divinity. Nor can we avoid deducing the same inference from his application of this divine title, when he illustrates his doctrine of faith in the Lord *Jesus*, as an object of prayer and invocation, by the declaration of Joel, that all who "call on the name of the Lord *(Jehovah)* shall be saved;" and when, on another

occasion, after reproving the Corinthians because they ate meats offered to idols, although they were also partakers of the cup of *the Lord*, and the *table of the Lord*, (that is, of the cup and table of the Lord *Jesus*) he immediately adds, "Do we provoke *the Lord* to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" and, soon afterwards, completes his discourse on the subject, in the sublime words of the Psalmist:—"the earth is the *Lord's* and the fulness thereof:" Rom. x. 13: *compare* Joel ii. 32: 1 Cor. x. 21—28: *compare* Psalm xxiv. 1.

But the title *Lord* is not the only divine name which Paul has applied to Jesus Christ: twice incidentally, and once by a positive assertion, has this apostle confesssd that Jesus is GOD.

In our common English version of the Epistle to the Ephesians, we read that no "coveteous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God:" v. 5. Now, according to a common rule of Greek construction, *which, within its true limits*, is constantly observed by the writers of the New Testament, and amongst the rest by the apostle Paul, the words here translated "the kingdom of Christ and of God," ought clearly to be rendered, "*the kingdom of him who is Christ and God;*" and in this sense the passage appears to have been uniformly understood by the persons who were the most competent to form, in such a case, an accurate estimate of the apostle's meaning—I mean those early ecclesiastical writers, to whom Greek was both a living and a *native* language.

Another passage, to the same effect, forms a very striking part of the Epistle of Paul to Titus: "For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world: looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ:" ii. 11—13. Whether it was the intention of our translators, in this passage, to separate the titles God and Saviour, or to introduce them as the joint epithets

of Jesus Christ, is quite doubtful; but, in the original Greek, there does not appear to be any ambiguity; for, according to the same rule of construction, and the known customary phraseology of this apostle, both terms must be considered as applying to Jesus Christ; and the passage ought therefore to be rendered, "the glorious appearing of *our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*" In the present instance, this version of the apostle's words is confirmed, not only by the concurrent and unhesitating testimony of both the Greek and Latin fathers, but also by the words "glorious appearing."[8] It would, I think, be plainly at variance with the harmony of Christian doctrine, as it is revealed in the New Testament, and particularly in the Epistles of Paul, to speak of the "*glorious appearing*" of the Father, that "blessed and only Potentate," whom *no man hath seen, nor can see:* 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. The Father is made manifest to mankind only in the Son, who is the "Image of the *invisible* God;" (Col. i. 15;) and, as it is the Son alone who hath already "*appeared*," to bring "life and immortality to light through the Gospel," and "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" (2 Tim. i. 10; Heb. ix. 26;) so, from various passages of Scripture, are we led to conclude, that it is the Son alone who, in the great day of retribution, "shall *appear* the second time without sin (i. e. without a sin-offering[9]) unto salvation:" verse 28. Accordingly, the word here rendered "appearing," is uniformly employed by this apostle, (who alone, of all the writers of the New Testament, has made use of it) to denote either the first or the second coming of *Jesus Christ:* and the comparison of 2 Thess. ii. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 14; and 2 Tim. iv. 1, in particular, with the passage now before us, will be found to afford a strong confirming evidence, that by "the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour," is here

[8] ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης. That this phrase is rightly rendered "*glorious appearing*," is evinced by the comparison of Rom. viii. 21: 2 Cor. iv. 4: Phil. iii. 22: Col. i. 11: 1 Tim. i. 11.

[9] χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας, *sine victima pro peccatis: Schleusner in voc., No.* 11: *compare* 2 Cor. v. 21.

intended the visible coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory, for the salvation of his people, and for the judgment of all mankind.[1]

[1] The rule of Greek construction, above referred to, may be stated as follows:— *When two or more nouns of personal description, (whether substantives, adjectives, or participles) of the singular number, and of the same gender and case, are connected by a conjunction or conjunctions; if the article is prefixed to the first of them and not to the other, or others, they both or all relate to the same person.* The rule, as it is thus stated, does not apply to proper names, but is, I believe, limited by no other exception. Sharpe and Wordsworth assert, that there is no instance of the infraction of the rule (within the above limits) in the Greek Testament; and if any examples of the kind exist in the works of profane authors, they must have arisen from great carelessness in composition, (or more probably from error in transcription) and are, on all hands, allowed to be extremely rare. That the apostle Paul, in particular, constantly and *naturally* observed this rule, is evident from very many passages in his Epistles: *see, for example,* Rom. xv. 6: 2 Cor. i. 3: Phil. iv. 20: Col. iv. 9: Ephes. vi. 21. *See Remarks on Greek Art. by G. Sharpe; Six Letters to G. Sharpe, by C. Wordsworth, D. D.; and the Doctrine of the Greek Art. by Bishop Middleton.* Wordsworth's Six Letters contain references to those passages in the works of the Fathers, in which the texts adduced by G. Sharpe are cited. As Greek authorities for the proposed interpretation of Ephes. v. 5, he quotes *Chrysostom, Cyril Alex. Theodoret, Anastasius, Euthymius, and Pseud. Athanasius*; and for that of Titus ii. 13, *Clemens Alex. Hyppolytus, Athanasius, Cyril Hieros. Epiphanius, Basil, Gregory Nyssen, Chrysostom, Cyril Alex. Theodoret, and Œcumenius.* Another example of the application to Jesus Christ of the attributive Θεὸς, may be found in 2 Pet. i. 1, where the words ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ought, on the same principles, to be rendered, "Through the righteousness of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, *compare* verse 11. Sharpe also adduces 2 Thess. i. 12; 1 Tim. v. 21; in which we have the phrase τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Κυρίου and Jude 4, where we read Θεὸν καὶ Κύριον; but, as Κύριος, when applied to our Saviour, has very much the force of a proper name, these examples are of a somewhat doubtful character.

Thus we find that according to the doctrine of the apostle Paul, Jesus, who now reigns supreme over his own church, and who will come again in great power and glory for her final salvation, is *not only Christ but God*—is *the great God and Saviour* of his people; and now it only remains for me to adduce a memorable passage from the Epistle to the Romans, in which the same truth is directly *asserted:* "I could wish," says the apostle, "that myself were accursed (or laid aside) from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service, (of God) and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER, Amen:" Rom. ix. 3—5.[2]

[2] Rom. ix. 3—5. ὧν οἱ πατέρες, καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is *over all, God blessed for ever.*" It must, I think, be allowed by the careful and impartial critic, that the apostle's words are capable of no other meaning than that which our translators have attributed to them, and which appears to have been universally adopted by such of the early fathers as have cited the passage: *see, for example, Irenæus Adv. Hær.* iii. 16, Ed. *Ben.* p. 205; *Hyppolyt. Adv. Noetum*, sect. 2 and 6; *Origen*, (teste Ruffino) *Com. in loc.*; *Tertullian, adv. Prax. bis*, Ed. *Seml.* ii. 218, 225; *Novatian de reg. fid.* Ed. *Jackson*, p. 99; *Athanasius contra Arian.*, orat. 2, Ed. *Colon* i. 317; *Chrysostom, de Dei nat.* Ed. *Ben.* i. 483; *Basil. adv. Eunom.* lib. iv. Ed. *Ben.* i. 282; *Jerom Theodoret, Theophylact, in loc.* The attempt which has been made by the Socinians, to place a full stop at σάρκα, and to render the remainder of the verse, "God who is over all (be) blessed for ever!" is not only contrary to all authority, (for MSS. versions, and fathers, unite in proving, that the verse was never so divided in ancient times) but is totally at variance also with the rules of grammatical construction; for had such a *blessing* been intended to be expressed, the words must have been arranged in quite a different order, as is evinced by a great number of examples in the Greek Scriptures, including the

I may now invite the reader to a brief review of our whole argument.

The Old Testament abounds with prophetical descriptions of the joyful, righteous, and eternal, reign of a mighty monarch, who was destined to arise according to the flesh from the family of David, and to rule with absolute authority, not only over the house of Israel, but over the world at large.

As these prophecies were, in general, understood by the ancient Jews to relate to a person whom they denominated the Messiah, and whose coming in temporal glory they fondly expected, so the New Testament affords abundant evidence that he of whom they testify is indeed the Messiah, the anointed one of God—the Lord Jesus Christ; and their accomplishment properly belongs to that division of his revealed history, which commenced when he ascended into heaven, and was enthroned in glory at the right hand of the Father.

In tracing the light which is reflected from the scriptural account of the Messiah's reign of glory, on the offices, character, and nature, of Christ himself, we observe, in the first place, that God governs his people *through* Christ, and that Jesus, the King of Israel, the Mediator between God and man, is

Septuagint: *vide Trommii et Schmidii Concc.* In such a case the word εὐλογητὸς must have stood first in the series. The apostle's sentence obviously presents to us a *climax* of ideas, very analogous to the frequent train of this writer's thoughts. After having enumerated a variety of particulars, in which the Jews were preeminently favoured and honoured, he concludes with a statement of their highest glory and privilege, viz. that, according to the flesh, *he* was descended from them, *who is over all, God blessed for ever*. The antithesis here observed between the human and divine natures of Christ is also perfectly natural, and, in point of style, as well as doctrine, corresponds with Rom. i. 3, 4, where we read of Jesus Christ, "which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh," (κατὰ σάρκα) and was declared (or proved) to be, the SON OF GOD with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

subject to the Father, from whom alone his dominion is derived.

This statement is in full accordance with the explicit doctrine of Scripture, that the risen and ascended Jesus is *man*, the glorified brother, and sympathising master and friend, of his unworthy followers.

On the other hand, the reign of Jesus Christ is, in various respects, of such a description, that the impartial inquirer after scriptural truth is constrained to confess, that this "king of glory," by whom it is conducted, is not only man, but GOD. For, in the first place, as the Heir and legitimate Possessor of all things, he reigns without control, not only over the church which he has himself "builded," but over all the creatures of God. And, secondly, his dominion is not earthly, but *divine*: it is conducted by a celestial and invisible agency, and, as far as relates to mankind, consists in a moral and spiritual government over their souls.

More particularly, *Jesus Christ, in his reign*, is the Author of grace. He supplies all the need of the souls of his people. He forgives, converts, regenerates, and sanctifies them. He bestows those various spiritual endowments, which, under his authority and guidance, his servants exercise for the establishment, maintenance, and edification of the church. He not only wrought the miracles of his apostles, but inspired their doctrine. With perfect wisdom, justice, and love, he orders the external circumstances of his own people; and even the universe is subject to his providence; for, as on the one hand, all things were created by him, so, on the other hand, *by him all things consist*. Lastly, we learn at once, from the recorded example, and from the inspired doctrine of his primitive disciples, that Jesus Christ, in his reign, is a proper object of prayer, glorification, religious affiance, and unqualified dedication of heart.

The plain evidence of the divinity of Christ, afforded us by this scriptural view of his kingdom, is amply confirmed by the comparison of the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament ascribes *exclusively* to God those various attributes, offices, and honours,

which the evangelists and apostles as plainly attribute to Jesus Christ in his reign. And since divine truth is uniform and unchangeable, it follows that Jesus Christ, in his reign, is GOD.

In the accounts given by the sacred writers of that glorious æra of the reign of the Messiah, which is appointed for the final and universal judgment of men, Jesus is still represented as the Mediator, who receives his authority from the Father; and it is declared, that all judgment is *committed* unto him, *because he is the Son of Man.* Nevertheless, when, at that solemn crisis, he changes the quick, and raises to life the dead, of all generations—when he folds up the heavens and earth as a vesture—when he detects the secrets of all hearts—when he dispenses eternal rewards and punishments, (and all these acts are foretold in Scripture as the acts of our Redeemer) then will he again display the characteristic attributes, and perform the acknowledged works, of *deity;* and thus it shall once more be demonstrated that Jesus, the king of glory, is truly God.

Lastly, all reasonable doubt of the truth of that doctrine is completely set at rest by the plain testimonies of Scripture, whether incidental or direct, that the Messiah, in his reign, is "Jehovah our righteousness,"—"God,"—"The True God,"—"both Christ and God,"—"our Great God and Saviour,"—"God, blessed for ever."

And now, in closing our remarks on this extensive subject, it may be well for us briefly to advert to a well-known scriptural statement respecting the termination of that vast scheme of divine mercy and providence, which revelation has unfolded to us, and of which Christ, in his mediatorial capacity, is the appointed conductor: "As in Adam all die," says the apostle Paul to the Corinthians, "even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down (or subdued) all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must

reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet..... But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued under him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all :" 1 Cor. xv. 22—28.

The Mediator, Jesus Christ, uniting in his own person the human with the divine nature, exercises, as has been already observed, a derived dominion over all the creatures of God ; and in this capacity he must continue to reign *until all his enemies are destroyed* : "The Lord said unto my Lord," cried David, "Sit thou on my right hand, *until* I make thine enemies thy footstool :" Psalm cx. 1. The last enemy which shall be destroyed is death : and death will be destroyed when all men shall be raised or changed, and shall thus become incorruptible and immortal. When this mighty event has taken place, and when the retributive purposes of the Almighty are effected, there will be an end—a full conclusion and accomplishment—of that economical dispensation which is committed in trust to the Messiah ; and he, who throughout the various stages of his mediatorial agency, was always subject to the Father who "put all things under him," will confirm and make manifest that subjection in the sight of the universe, when he delivers up his kingdom to him from whom he received it.

But, although the mediatorial economy, and that vice-regal authority of the Messiah, which forms an essential part of it, will thus be brought to its conclusion, let it always be remembered, that "Jesus Christ is THE SAME yesterday, and to-day, and FOR EVER :" Heb. xiii. 8. He will never lose his distinctive character, as the Lamb of God—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—the Saviour and Redeemer of his people. When, under the figure of the New Jerusalem, the apostle John, in the Revelation, depicts the glorified condition of the church of Christ *after the great day of final retribution*, he says, "I saw no temple therein ; for the Lord God,

Almighty *and the Lamb* are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the *Lamb* is the light thereof:" Rev. xxi. 22, 23. Again, it was "out of the throne of God, and *of the Lamb*," and he *then* beheld proceeding, "a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal. And there shall be no more curse," says the apostle, "but the throne of God and *of the Lamb* shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him!" xxii. 1—3.

Lastly, as Christ is himself unchangeable and eternal —unchangeable and eternal also, in the largest and most important respects, is his *reign in glory*. His dominion is an "everlasting dominion," which "*shall not be destroyed:*" it is "*established for ever:*" it shall have "*no end:*" Dan. vii. 14: Luke i. 33. When we regard our Saviour in his human nature, we may rest assured that the immortal Son of David will never lose the reward of his sufferings, nor resign his authority over that church universal which he has purchased with his own blood. But, in a far more exalted sense, Jesus Christ will reign for ever, *as he is God*. The Son or Word of the Father, by whom all things were created, "that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible," cannot cease to retain an uncontroled dominion over the works of his own hands. In perfect oneness with the Father, and with the Holy Spirit, he will, to all eternity, reign over the universe, and dispense to the innumerable company of saints and angels, by whom his throne is surrounded, the unsearchable riches of his wisdom, his power, and his love. Thus shall the one true and living God — the eternal ELOHIM—be ALL IN ALL FOR EVER.

While I can say with truth, that I have not, in the course of the Essay which I am now concluding, cited a single passage either in proof, or in support, of the doctrine of the deity of Christ, which I do not conscientiously believe to have a true relation, and just application, to the subject, I by no means intend to

assert, that the *very numerous* evidences thus adduced are all of the same kind, or all of equal cogency. On the contrary, there is to be observed in them, just that variety which is natural, and which every judicious inquirer would expect beforehand. Some of them are direct and positive; others are incidental or implied. Many may fairly be considered as amounting to *proofs*; others are expressly introduced, only as *indications*.

This admission may, I conceive, be made without any danger whatsoever to the strength of our argument; for nothing, perhaps, is more satisfactory, or more certainly indicative of truth, than the general concurrence of evidence, abundant in quantity, yet diversified in character. Were the doctrine in question clearly stated in a very few passages only of undoubted Scripture, it would indeed be allowed by the consistent believer in the Christian revelation. But, when we find that doctrine directly promulgated, or clearly implied, in a *vast number* of unshaken passages—when witness is added to witness, and testimony heaped on testimony—when information is poured in upon us from a multitude of different quarters, and under a vast variety of manner and form, (and this I conceive to be no more than a just description of our present case)—then, although the evidences adduced may not all be of the same importance, our doubts are overpowered by an accumulated force, and yield without reserve to the unquestionable *bearing* and *current* of Scripture.

But it is not the mere accumulation of evidence upon which I would here insist: it is, more especially, the consistency, correspondence, and harmony, of the whole proof. Although, when we examine some particular division of a lofty and extensive temple, we may approve the workmanship displayed in its construction, yet, until we have taken a comprehensive view of the edifice to which it belongs, we form a very inadequate notion of its real value. But, when we have marked the adaptation of arches, and pillars, and towers—when we have beheld portal answering to portal, and wing to wing, and the mighty dome of the centre, rising

above all, in its just and beautiful proportion—we are not only filled with admiration at the spectacle before us, but we learn to appreciate the force and significance of every single part, in the completeness and harmony of the whole design. Now, this is no unfair illustration of the kind of correspondence and consistency which distinguishes the evidences of Scripture on the subject of the divinity of Christ. They present to our view a beginning, a middle, and an end. Promiscuously scattered as they are over the Sacred Volume, they naturally fall into admirable order; and in that order they are continuous, arranged, and adapted. Part answers to part, and article to article; and the result of the whole is a fabric, excellent in beauty, and indissoluble in strength.

When, for instance, we compare those passages of Scripture, in which Christ is described by the divine titles, with others in which he is represented as possessing the divine attributes—or when we observe that the authority which he claimed was in precise accordance with the powers which he displayed, and with the worship which he admitted—our minds are impressed with a satisfactory sense of the uniformity and harmony of *truth*. This observation, however, applies with more especial force to the comparison of the various scriptural statements which relate respectively to the successive stages of his revealed history. When we read, that he who *in his preexistence* was "from of old, from everlasting," is for ever immutable *in his reign of glory;* that he by whom, *in the beginning*, all things were created, is *yet* upholding all things by the word of his power, and, *in an awful day to come*, will fold up the heavens and the earth as a vesture; that he who, *before his incarnation*, was the spiritual governor and inspirer of his people, poured forth the Holy Spirit *after his ascension*, and is *still* the author, as well as the minister, of every Christian grace; that he, who *originally* thought it not robbery to be equal with God, is *now* a joint object of prayer and praise with the Father, at whose right hand he is for ever exalted—when, in perfect correspondence with these evidences, we view, as the centre of our

subject, that glorious delineation, presented to us in the Gospel of the SON of GOD, actually manifest in the flesh, and yet assuming the character, exercising the attributes, and receiving the honours of deity—when, lastly, we reflect on the interesting fact, that Jesus Christ is denominated *God* or *Jehovah*, in connexion successively with his preexistence, his birth, his ministry, his death, his resurrection, his reign, and his judgments—when we bring all these points together, compare them, and mark their coincidence—we are obliged to confess that evidences at once so diversified, and so accordant, at once consisting of so many particular parts, and constituting so harmonious and perfect a whole, are *complete* and *irresistible*.

For my own part, I may venture to acknowledge a firm conviction, (grounded on long-continued study and reflection) that I must either give up the inspiration of Scripture, and with it perhaps the truth of Christianity itself, or allow the absolute and eternal divinity of Jesus Christ. In choosing my alternative, I cannot for a moment hesitate; for as, on the one hand, the inspiration of Scripture and the truth of Christianity rest on a basis which the profoundest thought and widest investigation serve only to establish, so, on the other hand, the glorious doctrine of "God manifest in the flesh," although, *as to its mode*, deeply mysterious, will ever be considered worthy of all acceptation by those who are acquainted with the depth of their natural degradation, and know their need of an *omnipotent* Redeemer.

ESSAY XI.

ON THE REDEMPTION OF MANKIND.

In the two preceding Essays we have been engaged, on the one hand, in contemplating the fall and moral ruin of our species; our loss of the image of God, and with it of eternal happiness; our subjection to the dominion of Satan; and our liability, under the curse of the law, to everlasting destruction: and, on the other hand, we have surveyed the evidences of Scripture respecting the person and nature of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ—a survey which, I trust, has been amply sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of the doctrine of his proper and unchangeable divinity. Such a course of investigation will be found to afford the most suitable introduction to that comprehensive and all-important topic of Christian theology — the *Redemption of mankind.*

What, we may justly inquire, was the mighty and equivalent purpose for which this infinitely-glorious Person, the Son of God, who is one with the Father in the divine nature, and is, therefore, himself JEHOVAH, did so marvellously humble himself—took our nature upon him, in that nature underwent every species of contumely and contradiction of sinners, and finally died, on the cross, a cruel and shameful death?

When we reflect on the perfect adaptation which always subsists, and is generally apparent, in the operation both of nature and of Providence, between the cause and the effect, the means and the end — when we thus take analogy as the guide of our reasoning—

we can scarcely avoid perceiving how strong an improbability attaches to the supposition that SUCH A ONE should not only come into the world, but should live, suffer, and die, as a man, for the *single* purpose of *revealing* the truth. Experience teaches us that any inspired person, whose divine mission was attested by miracles, might have been an adequate instrument for such a purpose: for it is evidently on this simple ground that Christians are unanimous in giving their credence to the doctrines delivered to the Jews by Moses, and to the followers of Jesus Christ by his apostles. No doubt, to reveal the truth was one of the offices of our blessed Saviour, that chief of prophets; nor ought we ever to forget that it was another of his offices, by his holy and charitable life and conversation on earth, to institute that perfect *pattern*, by which the conduct of his disciples, in all ages, was to be formed and regulated. For, Jesus Christ is the Image of the invisible God; and the perfection of the Christian character consists in its conformity to that Image—in its resemblance to the *divine model.*

But, important and salutary as these offices were, the peculiar circumstances of the case are such as inevitably lead us to believe, that, in humbling himself from the height of his divine glory, in assuming our frail and suffering nature, and in submitting, even to the death of the cross, the Son of God (in unison of counsel with the Father who sent him) had yet higher, nobler, and more comprehensive, purposes in view. When we consider the infinite dignity of our Heavenly Visitor, and the marvellous condescension which he displayed in visiting us, it seems impossible for us not to conclude, that such a dispensation of divine mercy towards us was intended to supply ALL our spiritual need.

It is true that we need information respecting heavenly things; for, without such information, we are, by nature, in great darkness. It is true also, that, as moral agents, we require, at the hands of our Heavenly Father, a revelation of his law; for, unless it is revealed to us, we are unable to obey it. Nor can we deny that it is a vast advantage to our weakness, to behold the

requisitions of that law embodied in a public and perfect example. Nevertheless, were information, precept, and example, the only blessings conferred on us, through the dispensation of the Gospel, *all* our need would be far indeed from being supplied. Powerless and corrupt as we are, we should still be left to perish in our sins; and the light thus communicated to us, if unaccompanied with further help, would only aggravate our woe, and render our destruction more terrible. Where is the individual who understands the "plague of his own heart," who is not aware that he stands in need, not only of information, but of reconciliation with God; not only of light but of life; not only of precept and example, but of power to obey the one and to imitate the other? Unquestionably, the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is no message of glad tidings to us, unless it proclaims to us *indemnity* and *cure*—the forgiveness of sins that are past, and a deliverance from sin for the future. Thus, and thus only, does it offer to us the supply of *all* our spiritual need.

This plain course of reasoning, grounded on Scriptural principles already recognized, lead us, with little difficulty, to the conclusion, that the Son of God did, indeed, come into the world in order to bestow upon us, not only information, precept, and example, but indemnity and cure; or, in a single word, REDEMPTION. But, happily, this is a subject on which we are not left to any conclusions of our own forming. It is one on which the declarations of Holy Writ are at once very abundant and very clear.

In endeavouring to unfold these scriptural evidences, I may, in the first place briefly advert to those parts of the Bible, in which the doctrine of *redemption, or salvation, by Jesus Christ*, is promulgated in *general terms*.

Such a description applies, in full force, to the first passage of the Bible in which the Messiah is alluded to. The great purpose of his mission was proclaimed at a very early stage of the history of man, when, after the fall of Adam and Eve, Jehovah thus addressed the serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise

thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel:" Gen. iii. 15. We have already found occasion to notice the evidence afforded by the analogy of Scripture in general, and by some indirect references to this passage in the New Testament, that the serpent who tempted Eve was the devil, the author of moral evil, and the great enemy of the souls of men; and that the seed of the woman, here mentioned, is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the descendant of Eve, and the Son of the Virgin Mary, is generally understood and allowed by the professors of the Christian name. From the curse here pronounced, therefore, and from the promise connected with it, we learn, that the incarnate Son of God was utterly to subdue our great adversary, and to deliver mankind from the thraldom of his power. Such an interpretation of Gen. iii. 15, is in full accordance with the doctrine of the apostle, who taught the Hebrews that the Son took part of flesh and blood, in order "that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage:" Heb. ii. 14, 15. And the apostle John has written on the same subject, in terms equally explicit: "He that committeth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning. *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil:*" 1 John iii. 8.

The divine purpose in the mission of the Messiah, which was thus obscurely indicated in the original promise of a Redeemer, was further unfolded in other prophecies of the Old Testament, which make mention of Christ as the Redeemer, or Saviour, of men. Such was the office, for example, which Job attributed to the Holy One of Israel, who was to stand in the latter days upon the earth; (xix. 25;) and by others of the prophets, the design of God, in sending his Son into the world, is expressly declared to be *salvation*—the salvation of his people—the salvation of mankind—"It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be MY SALVATION unto the

end of the earth:" Isa. xlix. 6: *comp.* Isa. xxxv. 4: Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Zec. ix. 9.

We know that the proper name of Christ was significant of the same doctrine, "Thou shalt bring forth a Son," said the angel Gabriel to Mary, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall *save* his people *from their sins;*" (Matt. i. 21;) and to the shepherds, who were "keeping watch over their flock by night," the birth of Jesus was announced as the birth of a *Saviour* —"Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a SAVIOUR, which is Christ the Lord:" Luke ii. 11. That the New Testament abounds with passages in which the same general account is given of the office of Jesus Christ, and of the purpose of his mission, it is almost needless to remark. It is the plain and frequent testimony of the evangelists and apostles, (as must be familiarly known to every well-instructed Christian) that Christ Jesus came into the world, "that the world, through him, might be saved"—that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world"—that he is made unto us, of God, "wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and *redemption*"—that he hath now "obtained *eternal redemption* for us"—that the Gospel is the "*power* of God to *salvation:*" *see* John iii. 17: Rom. i. 16: 1 Cor. i. 30: 1 Tim. i. 15: Heb. ix. 12: 1 John iv. 14, &c.

I am fully aware how familiarly these terms are applied to Jesus Christ, and to the dispensation of the Gospel, by persons whose views of Christian doctrine are, nevertheless, extremely deficient and limited; but the least reflection must, I think, suffice to convince the candid inquirer after divine truth, that these are no loose, metaphorical, unmeaning expressions; but are pregnant with a deep and most important signification. Such expressions afford a plain and decisive evidence that Jesus Christ came into the world, not merely as a prophet, a lawgiver, and an example, but as the *moral and spiritual deliverer of mankind.* Nothing, indeed, can be more expressly and powerfully to the point than the declaration of Jesus Christ himself—"the Son of man is come to seek and to SAVE that which was lost:" Luke xix. 10. All mankind,

in their falling and unregenerate condition, are *lost*. They are deprived of the image of their Creator, and their sins have separated them from their Lord; iniquity marks their course and never-ending misery is their sentence of condemnation. Now, as is their *loss* by nature, so is their *gain* by Christ. Their salvation is to be measured by the depth of their degradation, and by the extent of their ruin—it is to be estimated by the nature of the evils under which they labour, and of the destruction from which they are extricated. When, therefore, we hail the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world, and the Redeemer of mankind, we hail him, not only as one from whom we derive the most valuable information and instruction, but as one who actually *delivers* us from the burthen of guilt, from the power of sin, from the tyranny of Satan, and from "the bitter pains of eternal death."

Such is the *general* view which the sacred writers present to us, in *general* terms, of the purpose of the mission of the Son of God—to SAVE LOST MANKIND.

And now, in order to a fuller understanding of our subject, we may consider the two leading branches of it in succession, and may proceed to examine, in their due order, those scriptural evidences which prove that Jesus Christ came into the world, that he might bestow upon us *indemnity*, on the one hand, and *cure*, on the other—that he came, in the first place, to make an atonement for our sins, and, in the second place, to procure for us that celestial influence, by which alone we can be regenerated, sanctified, and prepared for heaven.

PART I.

ON THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

GOD, who is rich in mercy, looks down with the compassion of a Father on sinful, wandering, and lost, mankind;—and this is the language in which he graciously addresses them: *Repent, return, and live*—"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous

man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon:" Isa. lv. 7.

While, however, the pardon of God is thus graciously bestowed on the transgressor who turns away from his iniquities, and does that which is lawful and right, and while such a change of disposition and conduct is plainly to be regarded as an indispensable *condition*, without which sinful man can entertain no just hope of salvation; we are not to imagine that repentance and amendment are, *in themselves*, available to procure us forgiveness, to prevent the fatal consequences of our sins, and to purchase our eternal peace. Such a notion is opposed to the dictates even of natural religion; it is inconsistent with the known course of the providence of God, and it is completely overturned by the declarations of Scripture, and by the revealed principles of the *Gospel of Christ*.

Natural religion, amidst all her obscurities, may be said to assume the doctrine, that God, who is a Being of absolute purity and justice, is the moral Governor of the world; and that, as such, he will, sooner or later, render unto every man *according to his deeds*. Now, when we regard the Supreme Being in this point of view, it is impossible for us not to perceive the unreasonableness of the supposition, that a person who has long been accustomed to a life of sin, and who afterwards repents and amends, can, *without any satisfaction for past transgressions*, be regarded by him in the same light as if he were a perfectly virtuous person, who had never offended him. Present obedience does no more than fulfil present obligation; and, in the sight of a perfectly righteous God, there must always be an essential inequality between the *partial* and the *complete* fulfilment of the divine law. The difference which subsists between the two supposed cases may be safely brought to the test of the conscience, which, when rightly illuminated, and not perverted, is a sure, internal, representative of the mind of God. Were there a man existing, who had never, in the smallest particular, broken the divine law, his conscience would be at perfect rest; "for

if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." But the conscience of the converted sinner has pronounced against him the verdict of *guilty;* and so far is his change of disposition and conduct from cancelling the record, that the deeper and more effective his penitence, the darker and more indelible are the characters in which that record is written; the more virtuous he becomes, the more he abhors himself for his vice; and the more he is brought to feel his need of some powerful dispensation of mercy, by which, independently of any works of his own, his iniquities may be blotted out from the book of God's remembrance.

These plain dictates of reason and conscience derive no slight confirmation from *analogy;* for, in the course of nature and providence, as it is at present subjected to our observation, the moral government of God is already partially displayed. The spendthrift, the debauchee, and the criminal, may severally repent and amend. Nevertheless, in the ruined fortunes of the first, in the withered constitution of the second, and in the civil punishment of the third, we often perceive the strong practical indication that, under the moral government of our Creator, repentance and amendment are not, *in themselves*, sufficient to avert the effects of transgression. The effects of which I speak do indeed very usually arise in what is called a *natural order;* but that natural order is the mere result of the divine will; and in the same order may, very probably, arise also the eternal consequences of sin.

But the truths which are thus taught us, even independently of the aid of revelation, are rendered indisputable by the light of Scripture. In the Sacred Volume it is plainly recognized, that God is a Being of perfect holiness and justice—that he is "of purer eyes than to behold evil"—that he will by no means acquit the guilty for their own sakes—that, had we perfectly fulfilled his law, we should still be unprofitable servants, without any surplusage of merit—that not having fulfilled it, but having broken it again and again, we are, by nature, the children of wrath, and

are justly liable to the sentence of death pronounced and recorded against us: *see* Deut. xxxii. 4: Hab. i. 13; Nah. i. 3; Luke xvii. 10; Gal. iii. 10; Eph. ii. 3, &c. And, while the sacred writers plainly declare that forgiveness and salvation are ours, *on the condition of repentance and amendment*—with equal clearness, and with yet greater frequency, do they promulgate the doctrine, that the free mercies of our God towards us flow only through one appointed channel, and are bestowed upon us, not *because* we repent; not *because* we amend; not *because* we have deserved, or ever can deserve, those mercies; but *because* the Son of God, in pursuance of the counsels of the Father, and in his own voluntary love to man, offered himself up on the cross as an *atonement* or *propitiatory sacrifice*, for the sins of the whole world. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, *that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus:*" Rom. iii. 23—26.

It is in express reference to his propitiatory sacrifice, that Jesus Christ is declared, by one of his apostles, to have been "foreordained before the foundation of the world;" (1 Pet. i. 19, 20;) and when another apostle describes our Lord as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," (Rev. xiii. 8;) he obviously alludes to the same original appointment of divine mercy. Before the creation of man, his fall was foreknown, and his recovery, through a Mediator, was preordained of God. In the eternal counsels of divine wisdom and love, it was predestinated, as we clearly learn from these passages of Scripture, that the blood of the Lamb, and that alone, was to cleanse from sin. We cannot, therefore, be surprised that the promise of a Redeemer should have immediately succeeded the fall of our first parents; *(see* Gen. iii. 15;) and that this promise should appear to have been accompanied or followed by the institution

of an external rite, well adapted to the measure of illumination thus bestowed upon mankind, and calculated to point out, in a palpable and significant manner, the death merited by sin, on the one hand, and the atonement appointed to avert that death, on the other.

That the *sacrifice of animals*, as a ceremony of worship, was a practice which originated in the institution of the Supreme Being himself, is rendered extremely probable, in the first place, by the nearly universal prevalence of that practice, in all ages, throughout the known world. The uniform sense of mankind, that, in order to deprecate divine wrath sin must be not only repented of, but expiated, may indeed be traced to the light of reason, and to the operation of conscience; but that, in order to this expiation, the harmless animal was to be slaughtered, and his blood poured over the altar of the offended deity—that *this* was to be the mode in which the wrath of the gods was to be deprecated, and the punishment of the transgressor averted—appears to be a notion so absolutely unaccountable on merely natural principles, that, amidst all the corruptions under which it has been entertained by idolatrous mankind, its *universality and sameness* may well be considered to indicate an original revelation on the subject. But this probability is considerably heightened when we open the page of Scripture, and study the only authentic history of the earliest ages of the world. There we learn, that, from the fall of our first parents to the institution of the Mosaic law, animal sacrifice was resorted to by the most favoured worshippers of the true God. And, that this peculiar ceremony was really of divine appointment, we have reason to conclude, first, because it is wholly improbable that persons who enjoyed the largest measures of divine illumination, as it was then dispensed to mankind, and who were eminent for their piety and allegiance to the true God, should have ventured to approach him with a mere will-worship—with a rite apparently cruel and unreasonable, which had no other origin than their own delusive imaginations: and secondly,

because it is expressly recorded that this rite was approved and accepted, and, in some instances, actually *prescribed* by the deity himself.

When Abel "brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof, the Lord *had respect* unto Abel, and to his offering;" (Gen. iv. 4;) but to Cain and to his offering, which was merely of the fruit of the ground, "he had not respect," verse 5. The reason of this preference is stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where we read, that "*by faith* Abel offered unto God a *more excellent* sacrifice[3] than Cain:" xi. 4. Now, the offering of Cain, as well as that of Abel, was an obvious indication of such a general faith in God as recognized his existence, his authority, and his power. But the faith by which Abel was enabled to offer the *better* sacrifice was directed to the promise of a Redeemer; (Heb. xi. 39;) and was manifested, in a very conspicuous manner, by the performance of a strange and unnatural ceremony, in obedience, as we may reasonably suppose, to a divine command.[4] It

[3] πλείονα θυσίαν.

[4] Gen. iv. 3—7. "And, in process of time (מִקֵּץ יָמִים) it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering (מִנְחָתוֹ); but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted (or have the excellency שְׂאֵת)? and if thou doest not well, sin (חַטָּאת) lieth at the door; and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." There are good reasons for believing that חַטָּאת, in this passage, does not signify *sin*, but a *sin-offering*—a sense which that substantive very frequently assumes, especially in the writings of Moses, *vide* Exod. xxix. 14; Lev. iv. 8, 20, 24, 25; vi. 25; x. 19; xiv. 13, 19, &c. for, in the first place, the participle רֹבֵץ, with which it is here constructed, is masculine, for which circumstance we cannot well account, except on the ground that חַטָּאת (itself a feminine substantive) here denotes the *male animal* to be slain in sacrifice; and, secondly, the root רבץ, which does not appear to be very intelligible as connected with "*sin*," is properly descriptive of the lying down or couching of an *animal*: *see* Gen. xlix. 9; Isaiah xiii. 21; xvii. 2; Ezek. xix. 2; Zeph. ii. 14. This slight change in the version of the passage removes the obscurities in which it

is generally believed, that the divine approbation of Abel's sacrifice was displayed by the breaking forth of a miraculous fire, which consumed the accepted victim; for it is evident from the subsequent account of Cain, that the preference of his brother's offering to his own was indicated by some intelligible sign; and, from various passages in the history of the Old Testament, we learn that this was the sign by which Jehovah usually condescended to "testify" of the "gifts" of his servants: *see* Gen. xv. 17; Lev. ix. 24; Judges xiii. 19, &c.; *comp.* Heb. xi. 4. If this is true, so admirable a mark of divine favour, while it excited the jealousy of Cain, must have amply confirmed the conviction of Abel, that, in shedding the blood of an innocent lamb, (notwithstanding all the strangeness of the action[5]) he had been fulfilling a

is otherwise involved. Cain, having noticed the Lord's preference of Abel's sacrifice, is evidently jealous lest he should lose his preeminence and authority over his younger brother. The Lord, therefore, says to him, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not have the excellency? and if thou doest not well, a sacrifice for sin lieth even at thy door (that is, to atone for thy sin); and his desire (or deference) shall still be towards thee, and thou shalt rule over him."

Cain and Abel are described as presenting their offerings "in process of time," or rather "at the *end of days*," which is the literal meaning of the Hebrew, מִקֵּץ יָמִים. This expression appears to denote some fixed recurring period, at which it was ordained that sacrifice should be offered. Both their offerings are called מִנְחָה *Mincha*, a term which, under the law, usually described the meat-offering of flour. But, here the word has evidently its more *general* sense of an *offering* or *sacrifice—donum, oblatio: vide Simonis lex. in voc.* This passage is ably discussed in *Magee's "Discourses and Dissertations on the Atonement,"* third edition, vol. ii. p. 235.

[5] The sacrifice of a harmless beast must have appeared the more strange in the view of Abel, because there is reason to believe that, before the flood, animals were not permitted to be slain for the sustenance of man. The green herb and the fruits of the trees were given to Adam and his posterity for their food. "Behold," says Jehovah, "I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat:" Gen. i. 29. And that vegetable food *alone* was, at that time, allowed to our species, is evident from the reference made to this original grant of the green herb, when, after the flood another grant was

religious duty, and had been acting in strict conformity with the will of his Creator.

The next sacrifice, mentioned in Scripture, is that offered by Noah. After he had come forth from the ark, with his sons, and his sons' wives with him, we read, that he "builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar." Now, that this sacrifice also was acceptable to that Being, to whom the beasts and the fowls, as well as their lordly master, owed their existence, is plainly recorded. "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour, (or a savour of rest,)" says the sacred historian; "and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake:" Gen. viii. 20, 21. When Abraham returned from Egypt, and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, he there built an altar (i. e. literally, a place to slay victims on[6]) to the Lord: Gen. xiii. 18. This was an evidence that the rite of animal sacrifice was continued among those descendants of Noah who constituted, at that early period, the visible church of God; and it was in obedience to the direct command of Jehovah (as every reader of the Bible must remember) that, on a subsequent occasion, Abraham bound his son Isaac on Mount Moriah, and was about to sacrifice him there, when the Angel of the covenant stayed his hand, and provided him with a ram caught in the thicket for a burnt-offering to the Lord, instead of his child: Gen. xxii. 1—13.[7] No doubt it was on the same general principle, and in compliance with the same original institution, that animals were slain in sacrifice, by Jacob, by Moses and the Israelites, by Jethro, and by Balaam: *see* Gen. xlvi. 1; Exod. x. 25; xviii. 12; Numb. xxiii. 1.

added of birds, beasts, and fishes—"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you: *even as the green herb*, have I given you all things:" Gen. ix. 3.

[6] מזבח

[7] That Abraham, and those with whom he lived, were accustomed to the rite of animal sacrifice, more especially appears from the question addressed by Isaac to his father, while they were on the way to Mount Moriah, "Behold," said Isaac, "the fire and the wood, but where is *the lamb* for a burnt-offering?" Gen. xxii. 7.

But, of the sacrifices which were offered by the servants of the one God, independently of the Jewish law, I know of none which cast a clearer light on our present subject than those which are recorded in the history of Job, who probably lived in Arabia at a period anterior to the promulgation of that law. We read, that, after Job's sons and daughters had been entertaining one another in their houses, "Job sent, and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually:" Job i. 5. Again, at the close of the book, we find the Almighty himself *commanding* a similar sacrifice. "The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore, take unto you now seven bullocks, and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept; lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. So Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, went and did according as the Lord commanded them:" xlii. 7—9.

The sacrifices which were offered in the church of God, before the law, appear to have been all of one description. They were *burnt-offerings;* and this appellation was given to them because every part of the victim, after its blood had been poured forth, and except the skin and its appurtenances, was consumed with fire upon the altar. Now, that these sacrifices were in their nature *expiatory*, and not, as some persons have imagined, merely eucharistical, may be concluded, for various reasons. For, in the first place, the slaughter of the animal was probably significant of the death merited by the transgressions of the offerer. Secondly, the sacrifices of the heathen nations of antiquity (which may be regarded as a corrupt imitation of these original burnt-offerings)

were, for the most part, notoriously rites of deprecation or atonement. Thirdly, the same character attached (as we shall presently find occasion to observe) to the burnt-offerings enjoined by the Mosaic law; and, lastly, in the sacrifice of Noah, which was apparently intended to deprecate a repetition of the divine vengeance, and in the offerings of Job and his friends, which were expressly directed to the purpose of expiation, we have examples, which, in the total absence of all opposite testimony, may be considered as casting a clear light on the true signification of these rites in general.

But while it would be unreasonable to deny the expiatory character of these sacrifices, the doctrine of Scripture ought never to be forgotten, that "the blood of bulls and of goats" cannot "take away sin:" Heb. x. 4. And when, with these historical accounts of the burnt-offerings of Abel, of Noah, of Abraham, of Jacob, and of Job, we compare the doctrine of the New Testament, that the blood of Jesus Christ *alone* cleanses man from iniquity, we must surely allow that all these sacrifices did but typify the foreordained sacrifice of the Holy One of Israel; and that whatever they possessed of piacular virtue is to be traced exclusively to that great reality of which they were the shadows.

Now, the doctrine which rests on these powerful probabilities, as it relates to the offerings of the servants of God, before the Mosaic institution, may be regarded as fixed and ascertained, with respect to the sacrificial ordinances of the *Jewish ceremonial law*.

Of that law, sacrifice was, indeed, the distinguishing feature; and, while the variety, particularity, and strictness, of the edicts delivered on the subject, served the purpose of occupying the attention, and of correcting the idolatrous tendencies, of a carnal people, the whole system was fraught with allusion to the Christian doctrine of atonement.

Immediately after the delivery of the law from Mount Sinai, "Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the

twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins: and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you, concerning all these words:" Exod. xxiv. 4—8.

Thus it appears that, at the time of the promulgation of the Mosaic law, a solemn compact was made between God and his people. *They* contracted to obey his commandments in all things; and *he* graciously promised, on this reasonable condition, to be their guide, their protector, and their God: and this compact was ratified by the blood of immaculate victims, which were freely offered by Moses and the people on the Lord's holy altar. The death of these victims plainly denoted the penal consequences merited by the sins of the offerers; and the Lord's gracious acceptance of the vicarious sacrifice was, on his part, a sure pledge of his mercy towards his willing, though erring, children. And here it is of importance, once for all, to observe, that the atoning virtue is represented as being in the *blood* of the victim, because the blood was the *life* of it, and the shedding of its blood was the destruction of its *life*. "*The life of the flesh*," said Jehovah to the Israelites, "*is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul:*" Lev. xvii. 11.

Now, as the covenant between God and the Israelites was thus originally ratified by the shedding and sprinkling of blood, so was it afterwards maintained, and perpetually kept in the recollection of the people, by the frequently-recurring observance of the same rite, which, under the Mosaic institution, was practised on a multitude of occasions, and under a considerable variety of forms. The sacrifices enjoined by the law

were divided into three classes—*burnt-offerings*, *peace-offerings*, and *sin-offerings;* and these classes were distinguished from one another, not so much by any radical difference in the *principles* on which they were offered, as by the variation of ceremony under which they were administered. The burnt-offerings were distinguished chiefly by the circumstance already mentioned, that the whole of the animal, except the skin, was consumed on the altar. Like the sacrifices of the ancient patriarchs, these offerings, under the law, were, in general, voluntary—the prescribed indications of the *free-will* piety and devotion of the Lord's servants: Lev. i. Yet, on various stated occasions, the burnt-offering was required by express commandment—an observation which more particularly applies to the morning and evening sacrifice—the daily burnt-offering of two spotless male lambs of a year old, on the altar, first of the tabernacle, and afterwards of the temple at Jerusalem: Exod. xxix. 38.

The peace-offerings were freely presented to the Lord by his people, whenever they were prompted to it by their feeling of piety and devotion: and the lamb, the goat, or the bullock, thus offered, might be of any age, and of either sex. The flesh of the victim was eaten partly by the officiating priests, and partly by the offerers themselves: *see* Lev. iii: *Calmet's Dictionary*, "*Sacrifice.*"

Now, although the peace-offerings were uniformly voluntary, and the burnt-offerings frequently so, and thus assumed the peculiar character of *gifts;* and although, on these grounds, we may consider them (especially the former) to have been the acceptable signs of *gratitude* towards the Supreme Being, it is unquestionable that they were also directed to the great and leading purpose of atonement. With respect to the burnt-offerings, this fact is expressly stated: "If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt-sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary

will, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; *and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him:*" Lev. i. 2—4. Nor can it be doubted, that to make an atonement for the sins of the people (in a subordinate and figurative sense) was the true purpose of the daily burnt-offerings in the temple, which appear to have been purchased by the amount of half-shekels, annually contributed by the Israelites, as a "*ransom*" for their "souls:" Exod. xxx. 11—16.

And, again, with regard to the peace-offerings, *their* expiatory character is sufficiently marked by three circumstances, which uniformly accompanied them, in common with the other legal sacrifices. The first was the prescribed absence of every kind of blemish or uncleanness in the victim—a circumstance which was, probably, always connected with the notion that, in order to escape the merited penalty of his own death, the sinner was bound to offer a *perfect* substitute: Lev. iii. 1. The second was the imposition of hands on the head of the animal, by which expressive ceremony the offerer was supposed to transfer his transgressions to the victims offered: Lev. iii. 13. The third was the sprinkling of the blood, by the priest upon and around the altar (Lev. iii. 2;) —a rite notoriously significant of expiation for sin: Lev. xvii. 10, 11. The blood which Moses sprinkled on the altar, the book, and the people, for the ratification of the whole covenant of the law, was indeed the blood of burnt- and of *peace*-offerings: Exod. xxiv. 4—8.

Of the sin- or trespass-offerings, no portion was permitted to be eaten by the offerers: the sacrifice was considered "most holy;" (Lev. vi. 29;) part of it was burnt on the altar; and the rest was given as food to the priest, who was himself required to be clean, and without blemish. In some instances, however the victim, when the hands of the transgressor had been laid upon its head, was deemed to be polluted, and accordingly, after having been offered on the altar, it was conveyed to a place without the camp, or without

the gates of Jerusalem, and there entirely consumed by fire: Lev. iv. 12, 21; xvi. 27.

This last class of sacrifices was appointed for a great variety of occasions. On days of stated and solemn festival, and at many intermediate seasons, the sin-offerings (as well as the burnt-offerings) were to stain with their blood the altar of Jehovah; (Lev. xvi. xxiii;) and they were to be offered, as circumstances required, by the priests, by the rulers, by the whole congregation, and by individuals among the people: Lev. iv. Now, on whatsoever occasion, or by whatsoever parties, these sacrifices were to be made, they were uniformly, expressly, and exclusively, piacular. Whether the Israelite was polluted by merely ceremonial impurity, or by the sins of error and ignorance, or by the minor, though wilful, breaches of the moral law, the trespass-offering was still prescribed as the means of his readmission to the privileges of the Jewish worship; and although, in the first case, he was destined to undergo "divers washings," or baptisms, and, in the two latter cases, was required to make every possible amends for his transgression, yet he could by no means be purged from his defilement, or delivered from the guilt of his offences, without this indispensable *sacrifice for sin: see* Lev. v. 6, &c.

There are two principles which might be said to pervade the Mosaic institution, and which we ought particularly to notice as explanatory of our present subject. The first was this—that every transgression, either of the moral or of the ceremonial law, *merited* death; for he who continued not in all the things which were written in the book of the law, to do them, was *cursed;* and the substance—the gravamen—of the curse, to which he was thus exposed, was capital punishment: *see* Deut. xxvii. 26: Ezek. xviii. 20. But, as it was morally impossible, consistently with the divine attribute of mercy, and the many infirmities of man, that this principle of the law should be uniformly and strictly enforced, the system of vicarious sacrifice appears to have been appointed for its *alleviation.* The death merited by the offender was under-

gone by the substituted victim; the law was fulfilled in a figure; and, on every occasion of merely legal impurity, or of such moral offences as did not demand the actual execution of the sinner, the defiled or transgressing Israelite was delivered from death; and the unblemished lamb, or kid of the flock, or bullock of the herd, *bled in his room.* Thus was fully established the second principle to which I have alluded; namely, that, "*without shedding of blood, there is no remission:*" Heb. ix. 22.

Such was the nature, and such the operation, of the ancient Jewish sacrifices. They were generally and principally *rites of atonement;* and while, as acts of faith or obedience, of piety or penitence, they might be the means of bringing down upon the offerers the spiritual blessings of God, their efficacy, under the divine appointment, is to be chiefly traced in the "purifying of the flesh" from legal defilement; (Heb. ix. 13;) and in the removal of the civil and temporal punishment of moral transgression. Yet, even for these purposes, they must have been destitute of any real or *inherent* virtue; and, when we compare the extreme particularity and strictness of the divine injunctions respecting them, and the stress laid on the whole ceremonial by which they were accompanied, with "the weakness and unprofitableness" of the sacrificial rites themselves, it seems impossible for us not to entertain the belief, that they were fraught with some typical and ulterior signification. Now, that signification is no longer a matter of doubt or question. The Divine Being, by whom these ceremonies were instituted, has himself brought to light their meaning, by the *Gospel.* "The veil," which is over the mind of the Jew, in "the reading of the Old Testament," is "done away in *Christ:*" 2 Cor. iii. 14. "The law was our school-master, to bring us unto *Christ:*" Gal. iii. 24. "*Christ* is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" (Rom. x. 4;) and, as this doctrine is true of the moral law, because the ministration of condemnation is the fittest introduction to a knowledge of salvation through the merits of a Redeemer, so it is also true of the cere-

monial law, of which the diversified rites, and more particularly the sacrificial ordinances, are expressly declared by the apostle to have been "a shadow of good things to come—BUT THE BODY IS OF CHRIST:" Col. ii. 17: Heb. viii. 5; x. 1.

As the Jewish sacrificial institution, in general, was evidently figurative of the death of Jesus Christ, so this character applies, with especial accuracy and force, to certain very remarkable parts of that institution. I allude particularly to the Passover, and to the ceremonies which distinguished the great day of Atonement.

That the Passover was a *sacrificial* ordinance, is evident from various circumstances which accompanied its celebration; for, the Lamb eaten by every Jewish family, on the occasion of that festival, could be slain only at the tabernacle or temple where all the Lord's sacrifices were to be offered; (*see* Deut. xvi. 2—6: *compare* 2 Chron. xxxv. 5—11;) and, after it was slain by the offerer, the officiating priest sprinkled its blood, like that of other appointed victims, on the altar of God: *see* Exod. xxiii. 18: 2 Chron. xxx. 15, 16. Accordingly, we find, in the books of the law, frequent mention of the *sacrifice* of the Lord's Passover: *see* Exod. xxxiv. 25: Deut. xvi. 2, 5, &c. Now, that this sacrifice of the Passover was typical of the sacrifice of Christ, is to be concluded; first, because it appears to be in direct allusion to this particular rite, as well as to the daily burnt-offerings in the temple at Jerusalem, that Jesus Christ is, in the New Testament, so frequently called "the *Lamb*," or the "*Lamb* of God;" secondly, because the Scripture, which the evangelist declares to have been fulfilled when the soldiers abstained from breaking the legs of Jesus on the cross,—"a bone of him shall not be broken," (John xix. 36)—is probably *that* Scripture which forbids the breaking of a bone in *the Lamb of the Passover*; (*see* Exod. xii. 46; *compare* Numb. ix. 12;) and, thirdly, because the apostle Paul has expressly recorded that "Christ OUR PASSOVER is sacrificed for us:" 1 Cor. v. 7. Independently, indeed, of these authorities, it seems impossible

not to perceive the strong analogy which subsists between the two cases. The Lamb sacrificed in the Passover was a spotless and unblemished male of the flock; and it was offered up at Jerusalem, at a particular and distinguished period of the year. At the same period of the year, during the continuance of this very festival, and at the same place, Jesus Christ was offered up a sacrifice for the sins of mankind; and such was his character—such his meekness in suffering, such his perfect purity—that the apostle could describe him as "a Lamb without blemish and without spot:" 1 Peter i. 19. Again, the blood of the Lamb slain at the Passover, and sprinkled on the lintel of the door of every Israelite's house, was a clear representation of the blood of Christ sprinkled by faith, and, in a spiritual sense, upon the heart of every believer. The former was the appointed means of preserving the Israelites from the destroying hand of divine vengeance, which slew all the first-born of the land of Egypt; the latter saves the believing and obedient soul from that eternal death which impends over the unregenerate children of a fallen world.

The typical nature of the ceremonies practised on the *day of Atonement* is determined by the express doctrine of Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews: chap. ix. 1—14, &c. Nothing, indeed, could be more pointedly significant of "good things to come," than the ceremonies in question: *see* Leviticus xvi. On the annual occurrence of the appointed period—the tenth day of the seventh month—the high-priest alone entered into the Holy of Holies, where were the mercy-seat, and the cherubim, and the visible glory of God; and there, with the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifices for sin, he made an atonement for the holy place, for himself, for his household, and for the congregation of Israel: verse 17. "On that day," said Jehovah, "shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord:" verse 30. Washed was the flesh, and of pure linen were the *humble* garments, of the Lord's appointed minister, on this solemn occasion. The bullock was offered up for his own sins; but two

kids of the goat were the "sin-offering" for the congregation of the people: verse 5. One of them, in pursuance of the decision of the lot, was appointed for a victim, and its blood, like that of the bullock, (the sin-offering for the priest himself) was sprinkled on the mercy-seat. The other was the *scape-goat. He* was presented alive before the Lord; and, after the high-priest had laid his hands upon him, and had confessed, over him, "all the iniquities of the children of Israel," he was sent, by the hands of a "fit man," to the border of the wilderness, and was there suffered to escape, that he might carry away the sins of the people into a region unknown and uninhabited: verse 21. After the whole sacrifice was completed, the high-priest laid aside his linen clothes, and again assumed those magnificent vestments which designated the original splendor and dignity of his office. Now, who does not perceive, in these curious and striking ordinances, a close and harmonious, though varied allusion to that more glorious dispensation, under which the Son of God, a High-Priest of divine dignity and perfect holiness, has offered himself, once for all, a sacrifice for the sins of mankind—has sealed with the sprinkling of his own blood the mercies of the Father —has appeared in the heaven of heavens for us—and, after having, in the garb of humiliation, borne the burthen of our transgressions, and removed far away from us the guilt of our sin, is now once more exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high, arrayed in all the glory of his eternal Godhead?

Having duly considered that indirect information, respecting the Christian doctrine of atonement, which may be derived from the typical rite of sacrifice, as it was observed, first by the patriarchs, and, secondly, under the Jewish law, I may now proceed to adduce those scriptural evidences which bear directly and positively on the point in question. These evidences belong partly to the prophecies of the ancient Hebrews, and partly to the New Testament.

Preeminent, in the former class, is that wonderful prophecy (so familiarly known to every reader of the Bible) which forms the fifty-third chapter of the book

of Isaiah. Bishop Lowth's version of it, which I conceive to be, on the whole, more exact than the common English version, is as follows:

1. "Who hath believed our report; and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been manifested?

2. For he groweth up in their sight like a tender sucker, and like a root from a thirsty soil: he hath no form, nor any beauty, that we should regard him: nor is his countenance such, that we should desire him.

3. Despised, nor accounted in the number of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: as one that hideth his face from us:[8] he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4. Surely our infirmities he hath borne, and our sorrows he hath carried them;[9] yet we thought him judicially stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

[8] Lowth reads the Hebrew of this passage וכמסתיר פניו ממנו, and explains the expressions as relating to the custom usual amongst ancient Hebrew mourners, of covering their heads, and of concealing the lower part of their faces: 2 Sam. xv. 30: Ezek. xxiv. 17.

[9] Hebrew text—אכן חלינו הוא נשׂא ומכאבינו סבלם The common English version is, in this instance, preferable to that of Lowth; for the passage obviously contains a reference to the preceding verse, which describes the Messiah as "a man of *sorrows*, and acquainted with *grief*"—"Surely (adds the prophet) he hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows." Although these expressions, when taken in connexion with the context, are evidently descriptive of the vicarious sufferings of Christ for sinners, they have a subordinate application to the circumstance of his relieving the people, by his miracles, from their bodily and mental diseases, as appears from Matt. viii. 17. Nor is such a double interpretation in the least degree inconsistent with the genius of ancient Hebrew prophecy, which is often fraught with several coincident and *analogous* significations. The verb נשׂא is best understood as signifying, *in se sustulit, portavit*; and though, in this use, it is more properly descriptive of the bearing of those sorrows which were the penalty of our sin, than of curing diseases, it is by no means inapplicable to the latter subject. The idea seems to be, *ex eri nostro suos humeros supposuit—ita nos liberavit.*

5. But he was wounded for our transgressions; was smitten for our iniquities: the chastisement by which our peace is effected was laid upon him; and by his bruises (or stripes [1]) we are healed.

6. All we, like sheep, have strayed; we have turned aside every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath made to light (or to meet) upon him [2] the iniquity of us all.

7. It was exacted, and he was made answerable; [3] and he opened not his mouth: as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb; so he opened not his mouth.

8. By an oppressive judgment he was taken off; and his manner of life, who would declare? [4] for he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was smitten to death.

9. And his grave was appointed with the wicked, and with the rich man was his tomb.[5] Although he

[1] Hebrew חבורתו.

[2] הפגיע בו literally, *incurrere vel irruere fecit in eum.*

[3] Hebrew נגש והוא נענה. Lowth's version of this passage is at once very literal, and entirely accordant with the context. נגש is, *exegit, veluti a debitore pecuniam, vel a reo pœnam;* and in the Niphal, or passive voice, (as in this passage) it may, of course, be properly rendered, "exactum est." ענה signifies either *afflixit* or *respondit*: and when in the passive form, it is still capable (as appears from Ezek. xiv. 4, 7) of the latter sense. "It was exacted—and he answered, or was made answerable." Vitringa renders the passage, "*exigebatur* et ipse *afflictus est.*"

[4] Hebrew את דורו מי ישוחח English Version. "Who shall declare his generation?" The word דור in this difficult passage, is of uncertain signification. If it is capable of being rendered, "manner of life," (which is somewhat doubtful) the passage may contain a reference (as Lowth supposes) to the Jewish forensic practice of instituting a public inquiry respecting the character of a criminal, before sentence of condemnation was passed upon him: *see Lowth's note in loc.*

[5] Hebrew במותיו English Version—"*in his death.*" Lowth, after Schindler, Drusius, and others, regards the ב as radical; in which case במותיו literally signifies *excelsa sua*—a phrase

had done no wrong, neither was there any guile in his mouth; (10) yet it pleased Jehovah to crush him with affliction. If (or when) his soul shall make a propitiatory sacrifice (or a trespass-offering)[6] he shall see a seed which shall prolong their days, and the gracious purpose of Jehovah shall prosper in his hands.

11. Of the travail of his soul he shall see the fruit, and be satisfied: by the knowledge of him shall my righteous servant justify many; for the punishment of their iniquities shall he bear.

12. Therefore will I distribute to him the many for his portion; and the mighty people shall he share for his spoil, because he poured out his soul unto death: and was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many; and made intercesssion for the transgressors."

While some of the Jews (for example, the Targumist and Kimchi) have attempted to explain this extraordinary prophecy as relating to the people of Israel, (an explanation of which a candid view of the text must at once show the absurdity) others of them have plainly confessed that it was written concerning the Messiah.[7] But, whatsoever may be the opinion of the Jew, this is a subject on which the Christian cannot hesitate. In applying this prediction to the true Messiah of Israel, he is amply justified, first, by its astonishing appositeness to the life and death of Jesus, and to many of the circumstances with which

which may denote *a tomb, tumulus,* or *monumentum;* or the reference may be to the *high places* which the Israelites were accustomed to select for the purpose of burial. So the tomb of Joseph was on Mount Calvary: *see Lowth's note in loc.*

[6] Hebrew אם תשים אשם נפשו "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." E. V. or "when his soul shall make an offering for sin." The latter appears the preferable mode of rendering the passage; but the Hebrew admits of either sense —"The verb תשים being either the second person governed by "thou" understood, or the third person feminine, governed by נפש.

[7] *See Vitringa, in Esaiam,* vol. ii. p. 658; *Gill on* Isa. liii. 6; *Martini Fug. Fid.* pars III. diss. I. cap. X.

they were attended. If the question is asked, Who was he who, in his low estate, arose like a root out of a dry ground; who was destitute of any worldly glory and splendor; who was not believed in by the Jews; was despised, rejected, smitten, bruised, and persecuted; who was absolutely free from any wrong or guile, and yet was crushed with affliction; who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and opened not his mouth; died with the wicked; was buried with the rich; and afterwards became the spiritual Lord of a great people, and saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied?—the whole history of the New Testament plainly answers—*Jesus*. And, secondly, for such an application of this prophecy, we have ample authority in the writings of the apostles and evangelists, who, in their doctrine respecting the atoning efficacy of the death of Christ, appear to have often alluded to it, and have occasionally cited its contents as directly prophetical of Christ. Thus, when the Ethiopean, who was reading one of the most remarkable passages of this memorable prediction, inquired of Philip, of whom the prophet spake: we are informed that Philip opened his mouth, and *began at the same Scripture*, and preached unto him *Jesus*:" Acts viii. 34, 35: *compare* John xii. 38: Matt. viii. 17: Mark ix. 12: 1 Pet. ii. 22—25: *see also* Rom. iv. 25: 1 Cor. xv. 3.

If, then, it is allowed that this prophecy describes our blessed Saviour, it follows that the doctrine of his vicarious sufferings—the doctrine that he atoned for the sins of his people—is established on a foundation which can never be shaken; for nothing surely can be more full and explicit, nothing less liable to mistake or perversion—than the reiterated terms in which that doctrine is here promulgated. Christ was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; but the sorrows which he bore, and the griefs to which he submitted, were *ours*. Christ was bruised, wounded, scourged, and slain; yet, all this suffering unto death he underwent for *our* transgressions—for *our* iniquity. The Lord hath made to *meet* upon him the iniquities of us all. *We* all have gone astray—*he* was perfectly

innocent; but, for the penalty which *our* sins demanded, and which the holiness of God exacted, *he* was made answerable. The sentence of death was recorded against *us;* but *he* died in our stead; for he offered up his life a propitiatory sacrifice, and by the knowledge of himself he justifies many; the chastisement was *his:* the peace is *ours: he* suffered, and *we* are released: "by *his* stripes *we* are healed."

The same doctrine is probably alluded to, though briefly and somewhat obscurely, by the prophet Daniel, who, in his celebrated prediction respecting the seventy weeks, has made mention of the precise time when the Messiah should "be cut off, *but not for himself:*"[8] ix. 26. Again, the saving efficacy of the blood of the Messiah—is powerfully described in one of the prophecies of Zechariah, addressed to the people or church of God, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee, &c.....As for thee, also, by *the blood of thy covenant,* I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water:[9] turn you to the *strong hold,* ye prisoners of hope!" ix. 9—12.

On opening the volume of the New Testament, we find, in the history of the sufferings and crucifixion of the spotless Jesus, a key to the types of patriarchial and Mosaic worship, as well as to the marked and singular contents of these ancient prophecies; and, in the *doctrines* of our Lord himself and his apostles, we are supplied with clear and abundant evidence that

[8] יכרת משיח ואין לו. In rendering the verb יכרת as passive, our translators are supported, not only by the Masoretic points, but by the Syriac, Vulgate, and other ancient versions. The terms אין לו are of doubtful interpretation, but are clearly capable of the sense here given to them—"not for himself:" and that sense is in perfect harmony with other passages of Scripture: *compare* John xviii. 14, &c.

[9] The common English version of this passage is very literal and exact; the Hebrew text being as follows:
גם את בדם בריתך שלחתי אסיריך מבור אין
מים בו

the death of Christ was sacrificial—that by it an atonement was made for the sins of men.

The earliest testimony, on this subject, recorded in the New Testament, is that of John the Baptist, who proved his understanding of the typical nature of the ancient Jewish ceremony when he pointed out Jesus to the people, saying, "Behold, *the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world:*" John i. 29: *compare* verse 36. The title here given to Jesus has an obvious relation to the fact, that he was foreordained to be, like the lamb of the passover, or the lamb of the daily burnt-offering in the temple, *a sacrifice for sin;* and it is probably on this principle alone that he is also described as taking away (or *as taking up, in order to bear on himself,*) [1] the sin of the world.

In his own conversations with his disciples, our blessed Lord has not only presented himself to our attention in the general character of the Saviour of lost mankind; (Matt. xviii. 11; John iii. 17, &c.) but, in the more definite one of the *vicarious sufferer*, who was to give his life for his friends, for the multitude of believers, and for the world at large. "This is my commandment," said he to his disciples, "that ye love one another as I have loved you;" and then, in evident allusion to his approaching sacrifice of himself, he added, "Greater love hath no man than this, *that a man lay down his life for his friends;*" John xv. 12, 13. "I am the good Shepherd," he cried, on another occasion: "the good Shepherd

[1] John i. 29. Ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. The participle αἴρων may signify either qui *aufert*, or qui in *se suscipit*. The latter sense seems most accordant with the evidently *sacrificial* import of the passage. So the Syriac Peschito renders αἴρων, by a verb signifying portavit—gestavit. The verb αἴρω has the same sense in Matt. xi. 29, where our Saviour says, "Take my yoke upon you"—ἄρατε τὸν ζυγόν μου—and in xxvii. 32, where it is applied to the taking up and bearing of the cross. Schleusner understands αἴρων as here denoting *auferens*, but paraphrases the whole passage as follows: "*Hic est agnus divinus, qui culpas et scelera mortalium expiat;*" *in voc.* No. 7.

giveth his life *for the sheep ;* " (John x. 11) and still more comprehensive was his language, when he spake of himself as the *bread of life*—" I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever ; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, *which I will give for the life of the world :* " vi. 51.

When Jesus said to Nicodemus, " As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life," he evidently alluded, first, to his crucifixion, and, secondly, to that salvation which is procured " through faith in his blood ; " (*see* John iii. 14, 15 ; *comp.* xii. 32, 33) but there are two other passages, in his discourses, which state, in terms yet more significant and decisive, the Christian doctrine of atonement. The first is recorded in Matt. xx. 28, where we find Jesus presenting himself to his disciples as an example of disinterestedness and humility, and declaring that " the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY : " *comp.* Mark x. 45. These remarkable expressions very simply, yet forcibly, convey the doctrine, that the death of Christ was to be sacrificial —that he was to give up his own life as a sacrifice, in order to ransom or redeem " many " from that eternal death to which *they* are exposed. And no less plain were the terms in which our Lord called the attention of his followers to the same doctrine, when, at his last paschal supper with them, he took bread and brake it, and said, " This is my body which is given for you ; " (Luke xxii. 19) or, " which is *broken* for you ; " (1 Cor. xi. 24) and afterwards handed them the cup, saying, " Drink ye all of it ; for *this my blood of the New Testament (or covenant) which is shed for many, for the remission of sins !* " Matt. xxvi. 27, 28.

The mysteries of the kingdom of God, which were communicated to the apostles by their divine Master, " in darkness," they were to " speak in the light ; " and that which they heard " in the ear," they were to

preach "upon the house tops:" Matt. x. 27. No wonder, therefore, that those letters to the churches, which were given forth by the apostles after Jesus had died, and at a period when so plenary an illumination had been bestowed upon them through the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, should abound still more than the recorded discourses of our Lord himself, in the declarations of the doctrinal part of Christianity, and especially of the atoning virtue of the Redeemer's death.

Having premised this general remark, I may now offer to the reader's attention a selection of apostolic testimonies on this great subject. We may begin with Peter, who, in his first general Epistle, addresses the early Christian converts as persons who were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:*" i. 2. This apostle was well aware of the divine efficacy of the sprinkling of that blood by faith on the heart. Accordingly, we soon afterwards find him exhorting his brethren, as follows: "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:" i. 17—19. In the two following passages, he incites the believers to a patient bearing of injury and persecution, by holding up to their view the highest of examples—by insisting, in strong terms, on the meritorious and vicarious sufferings of Christ himself. "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.....who, his *own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose *stripes ye were healed:*" ii. 21—24. Again—"For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing; for, *Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for*

(or, *instead of) the unjust,*[2] *that he might bring us to God :*" iii. 17, 18.

The apostle John has written on this subject, in a manner equally explicit. After reciting the words of Caiaphas, "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not"—the apostle adds, "And this spake he not of himself; but being high-priest that year, he prophesied that *Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only*, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad :" John xi. 50—52. In his first Epistle he says, "If we walk in the light, as he (God) is in the light. . . . the *blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin :*" 1 John i. 7. Again—"These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous : and *he is the propitiation (or atonement)*[3] *for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world :*" ii. 1, 2. Again—"In this was manifested the love of God towards us because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love ; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and *sent his Son to be the propitiation (or atonement) for our sins :*" iv. 9, 10.

[2] δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων—"the just instead of the unjust." The preposition ὑπὲρ has sometimes the force of ἀντὶ, signifying *vice, loco : see* Philem. 13 : *comp. Eurip. Alcestes.* 705. That this is the sense of ὑπὲρ, in this passage is evinced by the evident antithesis between δίκαιος and ἀδίκων, and that particle, as applied to the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, may probably have the same meaning in Rom. v. 6. 8.

[3] ἱλασμὸς, *propitiation* or *atonement*. The meaning of this word is far too clear to be mistaken. Ἱλῆναι, is to be *kind or propitious ; see Odyss. Hom.* iii. 380. Ἀλλὰ ἄνασσ' ἱληδὶ δέ μοι.—"But, O queen, be propitious to me." Ἱλάσκειν active, and ἱλάσκεσθαι middle, is to *propitiate, or make expiation for sin*. So, in Heb. ii. 17, Jesus Christ is said ἱλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ—"to make reconciliation (or more properly to *make an atonement)* for the sins of the people." Ἱλασμὸς,

The strength and cogency of these simple, yet full, declarations of Christian doctrine will be allowed by every candid inquirer after scriptural truth. So also, in the Revelation, the *blood of Christ* is repeatedly mentioned as that which redeems from the penalties, and cleanses from the guilt, of sin. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, *for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood* out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation:" v. 9. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?.....These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the *blood of the Lamb. Therefore* are they before the throne of God," &c. Rev. vii. 13—15: *comp.* i. 5.

In presenting to the reader the testimony of the apostle Paul to a doctrine which he evidently considered as the very basis of Christian truth, I shall, for the present, make no citations from the Epistle to the Hebrews. The following passages, selected from his other Epistles (in addition to Rom. iii. 23—26, already quoted) I consider to be of a very satisfactory and conclusive character. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For, scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare

the substantive derived from these verbs, is properly the *act of propitiating*; but more usually, the *sin-offering*, or *expiatory sacrifice* by which propitiation is effected. Thus, in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, it answers to the Hebrew words, אָשָׁם a *trespass-offering*, חַטָּאת a *sin-offering*, כִּפֻּרִים an *atonement: vide Trommii Conc.* Schleusner's explanation of this substantive is quite in point: he says that it signifies, 1st *Propitiatio, expiatio*, seu *actio qua læsus et offensus placatur*; and 2ndly, *Id quod vim expiandi habet, is, qui expiat, sacrificium pro peccatis expiandis oblatum, victima expiatoria: vide lex. in voc.* In Rom. iii. 25, the word denoting *propitiation is* ἱλαστήριον, which is best understood as an adjective, agreeing with θῦμα or ἱερεῖον *(a sacrifice)* understood; in which sense the word is used by Josephus, in Mac. 18; *see Magee on Atonement*, 3rd ed. i. 222.

to die: but God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, *Christ died for us.* Much more, then, being now *justified by his blood,* we shall be saved from wrath through him:" Rom. v. 6—9. "For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that *Christ died for our sins* according to the Scriptures:" 1 Cor. xv. 3. "God was in Christ *reconciling* the world unto himself,[4] not imputing their trespasses unto them....For

[4] The Greek verbs which express "reconciliation," are διαλλάσσειν, καταλλάσσειν, ἀποκαταλλάσσειν, all of which signify generally, to change,—commutare, permutare; and thence, more particularly, to change enemies into friends: to reconcile and bring into a state of peace, parties previously hostile. When two parties, at variance with each other, are thus brought into a state of peace; if one is the *offended,* the other the *offending,* party, the expressions under consideration are applicable to either of them, and each may be properly said "to be reconciled" (διαλλασσέσθαι καταλλασσέσθαι) to the other. These verbs are applied to the *offended* party in some passages of the Apocrypha; (*vide* 2 Mac. i. 5; vii. 33; 1 Esdras iv. 31;) in all which instances, "to be reconciled" signifies "to be appeased."

In other instances, however, "reconciliation" is predicated of the offending party, and imports "a restoration to favour;" *vide Sept. Vers. of* 1 Sam. xxix. 4. Καὶ ἐν τίνι διαλλαγήσεται οὗτος τῷ Κυρίῳ αὐτοῦ; "And how shall this man be reconciled to his master," or "restored to his master's favour?" Matt. v. 24. πρῶτον διαλλάγηθι τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου, κ. τ. λ. "If thy brother have ought against thee—first be *reconciled* unto thy brother," &c. On the same principle God is represented in 2 Cor. v. 19, as *reconciling* (καταλλάσσων) sinners to himself, "*not imputing their trespasses unto them;*" and sinners are described as *being reconciled* to God, because they are brought into a condition of peace with him, and *restored to his favour. So Schleusner in voc.* καταλλάσσω. "Deus autem dicitur καταλλάσσειν ἀνθρώπους ἑαυτῷ, dum veniam peccatorum dat, et homines modum ac rationem *consequendi favorem suum* docet. Homines autem dicuntur καταλλασσέσθαι τῷ Θεῷ *quatenus habent Deum propitium et immunes sunt a pœnis peccatorum:*" *vide Magee on Atonement,* vol. i. p 203.

he hath made him to be *sin (or a sin-offering)* [5] for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:" 2 Cor. v. 19—21. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, *being made a curse for us:* for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" Gal. iii. 13. "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us *an offering and a sacrifice to God*, for a sweet-smelling savour:" Eph. v. 2. "(God) hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have *redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*.....for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell: and (having made peace *through the blood of his cross)* by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven: and you that were some time alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in *the body of his flesh through death*, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprovable, in his sight:" Col. i. 13, 14, 19—22. "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself A RANSOM FOR ALL, to be testified in due time:" 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6: *comp.* Acts xx. 28: Rom. viii. 3: Eph. v. 25—27: Titus ii. 14, &c. &c.

When we contemplate the very numerous scriptural declarations which have now been adduced respecting the Christian doctrine of atonement, we cannot fail to be struck with the *variety*, as well as with the force and harmony, of the terms in which that doctrine is expressed. Jesus Christ is set forth as carrying our sorrows, as bearing on himself the burthen of our ini-

[5] ἁμαρτία, *sin*—for *sin-offering*. This is a common change of meaning in Hebrew, as has already been noticed respecting the word חַטָּאת; and the Hebraism is very naturally transferred by the apostle to the Greek word ἁμαρτία, which corresponds with חַטָּאת. Ἁμαρτία signifies a *sin-offering* in the Septuagint version of Lev. v. 9; vi. 25; and probably, iv. 8; xiv. 19: also in Heb. ix. 28. So κάθαρμα in classical Greek, signifies both the *pollution* and the *expiatory offering*.

quities, as procuring for us the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with the Father, through his death; as giving himself for us; as giving his life a ranson for us; as suffering and dying not only for our sakes, but instead of us; as a sin-offering; as a passover sacrifice; as a propitiation, or atoning sacrifice; as purchasing us with a price; as undergoing for us an exacted penalty; as made a curse for us; as redeeming us from the curse of the law; as cleansing us, washing us, from our sins, in his blood.

It will be observed, that these terms are, in general, *sacrificial*, and, with a due allowance to their *superior* fulness, variety, and strength, they may be considered as closely corresponding with the phraseology which, in the Old Testament, is applied to the typical ordinances of sacrifice prescribed by the Jewish law. When, however, we recur to the books of Moses, for the assistance which they obviously afford us in the interpretation of some of these terms, we ought always to bear in mind, that the law is the shadow and figure—Christ the substance and reality: and, while there is an admirable analogy to be observed between the leading features of the Jewish sacrificial ordinances and the one great sacrifice of Christ, it follows, from the very nature of that analogy, that the terms now alluded to assume a far deeper and more extensive significance, when they are applied to the Mediator of the New Covenant, than can possibly be attributed to them when they are descriptive only of the types and ceremonies, the priests and victims, of the Mosaic institution. In order to the elucidation of this remark, we may briefly advert to a few plain particulars, in which there are to be observed at once a perfect *analogy* and an essential and sometimes infinite *difference* between the sacrifices of the law and the sacrifice of Christ, and between their respective circumstances and consequences.

The victims, offered under the law, were free from all external blemish or spot: Christ, the great sacrifice of the Gospel dispensation, was sinless, absolutely devoid of all moral pollution. The *blood* or *life*, of the burnt-offerings, the peace-offerings, and the sin-offerings, atoned for the ceremonial and legal offences, of

the ancient Israelites: the *blood*, or *life*, of Jesus Christ, who offered himself to God on the cross, atoned for the moral iniquities of the "whole world." In a merely figurative and ceremonial point of view, the animals slain in the sacrifice at the temple, and the goat who escaped to the wilderness, *bare* the pollutions of those who offered them: but it was in *deed* and in *truth* that Jesus "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." The animals sacrificed under the Jewish ritual were vicarious sufferers, because they underwent that physical death which the strictness of the Mosaic law would else have required to be inflicted on the erring Israelites themselves: Jesus Christ was a vicarious sufferer, because his death on the cross was graciously undergone by him, and as graciously accepted by the Father, in the place of that everlasting death, to which all men would otherwise have been exposed, as the certain punishment and legitimate consequence of sin. The sacrifices of the law were rights of reconciliation, inasmuch as they were the appointed means of restoring offenders to the privileges of that polity and worship, over which God himself condescended to preside: but it is through the sacrifice of Christ that men are truly reconciled to the Father, because through faith in its saving efficacy they are reinstated in his spiritual favour, and are enabled to hold a peaceful communion with him, in filial love. The former procured for the Jews some important external privileges, both of a civil and of a religious nature: the latter has obtained, for all men who believe and obey, unsullied, unutterable, and eternal happiness.

On the whole, then, the sacrifices of the law, in a figurative and subordinate sense, were *a ransom, an atonement, a propitiation*, for the people. But these terms, and others of the same general import, are applicable far more precisely, and in a sense very much more substantial and comprehensive, to the sacrifice of Christ. While, therefore, it is not to be denied that information respecting Christian doctrine may sometimes be derived from the figures of the Jewish ritual, we ought, in our perusal of Scripture, always to remember *that the Gospel is not to be explained by the law, but the law by the Gospel.*

Having premised these observations on the comparative significance of sacrificial terms, as they are applied respectively to the offerings of the Mosaic institution, and to the offering of Jesus Christ, I may proceed to complete the series of evidence to be adduced on the present subject, by citing some parts of the Epistle to the Hebrews—a treatise in which the analogy between the shadows of the law and the great realities of the Gospel, together with the natural unprofitableness of the former, and the essential virtue of the latter, are insisted on with such clearness and precision as must for ever preclude all reasonable doubt respecting the truth, the efficacy, and the *magnitude*, of the Christian doctrine of atonement. "Such an high-priest became us," says the apostle, "who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the people's; *for this he did once, when he offered up himself:* for the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was since the law maketh the Son who is consecrated for evermore:" vii. 26–28. This explicit passage may be considered as a sort of text or thesis to the reasoning which soon afterwards follows, respecting the Jewish ceremonial atonements, and the true atonement by Jesus Christ. "Now, when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God: but into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come, an high-priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect

tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, *how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?*" ix. 6—14.

Having urged this powerful comparison, the apostle proceeds to speak of Jesus Christ as the *testator* of that New Testament which he confirmed by his death; and, after showing that it was with blood that Moses ratified the first Testament, and that "almost all things" were "by the law purged with blood," he recurs to his main point as follows: "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these; for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after that the judgment: so Christ *was once offered to bear the sins of many;* and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin (that is, without a sin-offering) unto salvation:" verses 23—28: *comp.* ii. 17. Again "Every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man, *after* he *had offered one sacrifice for sins,* for ever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. FOR BY ONE OFFERING HE HATH PERFECTED FOR EVER THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED:" x. 11—14.

On a fair examination of these luminous passages, it seems impossible not to confess, on the one hand, that the sacrifices of the law were, in *their nature, weak and unprofitable;* and, on the other hand, that, in the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, there was *a real efficacy for the blotting out of all iniquity.* While, however, we heartily acknowledge this blessed truth, and, under a sense of our own vileness, gratefully avail ourselves of the "blood of the everlasting covenant," as the only atonement for our sins, we ought to exercise a holy caution, lest our sentiments on this subject should degenerate into *unscriptural and merely heathenish notions of expiatory sacrifice.*

Christians have not unfrequently been accused of assuming, as the foundation of their doctrine of atonement, the *natural implacability* of God towards man; and of holding the notion, that God was *rendered* placable by the involuntary sufferings of a harmless, unoffending, substitute. That such and similar statements of the opinions of Christians are, for the most part, gross misrepresentations, and that no such views have ever been entertained by any reflecting or consistent theologian, I am fully persuaded. Be that as it may, however, these unquestionably are not the views of the atonement presented to us *in the Bible.* There we plainly learn that the incarnation, humiliation, sufferings, and propitiatory sacrifice, of Christ, were ordained by the Father himself, as *the means* through which, in his own infinite knowledge and wisdom, he saw fit to provide for the satisfaction of his justice, and at the same time for the pardon and restoration of a lost and sinful race of his creatures. And these eternal counsels were so far from being the effect of any essential implacability in the mind of God —that the divine attribute to which they are uniformly ascribed, in Scripture, is the very opposite of such a quality. It is placability, it is mercy, it is love. "God SO LOVED the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:" John iii. 16. "God is love." In *this* was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into

the world, that we might live through him:" 1 John iv. 8, 9. Now, the Father and the Son (as we have already found abundant occasion to remark) are indissolubly one in *purpose* as well as in *essence:* and, in the gracious designs of the former for the salvation of man, the latter is represented in Scripture as a *voluntary* cooperator, actuated by the same divine impulse of unmerited love. It was the son of God who *undertook the cause of man.* Heb. ii. 16. In his adorable condescension, he "*made* HIMSELF of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, humbled HIMSELF, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross:" Phil. ii. 7, 8. "He offered HIMSELF without spot to God:" Heb. ix. 14. "Christ hath *loved* us, and hath given HIMSELF for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God:" Eph. v. 2. "Unto him that LOVED us, and washed us from our sins in his blood..... be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen:" Rev. i. 5, 6: *comp.* Eph. v. 25: John x. 17.

Lastly, let it be observed, that the love of the Father and of the Son, in which originated this scheme of mercy, was absolutely destitute of all partiality. It was directed without exclusion to *the whole of mankind.* It was *the world* that the Father so loved as to give his only-begotten Son: John iii. 16. It was the *world*—the "lost" *world*—that the Son came to save: xii. 47. He was the propitiation for the sins "of *the whole world:*" 1 John ii. 2. He gave himself "a ransom *for all:*" 1 Tim. ii. 6. He "tasted death for *every man:*" Heb. ii. 9. All men, therefore, whatsoever their circumstances, situation, or disposition, are through his death rendered capable of salvation. Nor can we, in reference to this sublime doctrine, rightly confine our views to those generations of men which have lived subsequently to the death of the Messiah. There is no tense with God. With him a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years; and as there is but one way into his kingdom, even the Lamb slain *from the foundation of the world,* so, on every principle of evangelical truth, it must surely be admitted, that in all ages, from the fall of our first parents to the present time, this way has been open

to every penitent believer in God. "There is not," remarks an eloquent writer, "one song for the patriarchs, and another for the prophets, and a third for the apostles—one for the saints of the old and another for those of the new dispensation; for patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and saints of every dispensation have all been indebted to the same Redeemer. The righteous Abel, the earliest victim of mortality, shall join in the same song with the last of the children of God, that falls asleep in Jesus. All having washed their robes and made them white in the same blood, shall sing together without a feeling or a note of discord—'Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and UNTO THE LAMB.'"[6]

On a review of the whole argument of the present part, the reader will observe,—

That the light of reason, and the analogy of that part of God's moral government over men, which is already known to us, conspire to render it in the highest degree probable, that repentance is not, *in itself*, available to avert the future punishment of sin.

That, in the Holy Scriptures, this position is amply confirmed; for, while the sacred writers often make mention of repentance as acceptable to God, and as an indispensable *condition* of salvation, they also plainly declare that sinners are saved only through the mediation of Jesus Christ,—only because he offered himself on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

That, as this *great atonement* was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, so, during all ages, from the fall of man to the Gospel dispensation, it was *foreshewn* by that divinely-appointed rite, the sacrifice of animals—a rite which was practised by Abel, by Noah, by Abraham, by Jacob, by Job, and by others of the Lord's servants, and which appears to have represented at once the death merited by offenders, and the ordained atoning sacrifice of a Redeemer to come.

That the Mosaic institution was distinguished by a variety of sacrificial ordinances; that the burnt-offer-

[6] *Wardlaw's Discourses*, vii. Sec. 3.

ings, the peace-offerings, and the sin-offerings, of the law, were all of a character more or less expiatory; being the appointed means of averting those penal consequences which would otherwise have been inflicted on the Israelites for their ceremonial impurities, and for their lesser moral offences; and that, according to the doctrine of the New Testament, these sacrifices were nothing more than "shadows of good things to come," —that is to say, types of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

That this typical character attaches with peculiar force and precision to the curious and striking ceremonial of the Passover, and of the day of annual atonement.

That the figures of the law were followed up and confirmed by the declarations of prophecy —Isaiah, especially, having left on record a luminous statement respecting the vicarious sufferings and atoning death of the Messiah.

That, in the New Testament, we find the Christian doctrine of atonement, alluded to by John the Baptist, repeatedly mentioned, in decisive language, by our Saviour himself, and, under a great variety of expression, largely unfolded, and strongly insisted on, by his apostles.

That the sacrificial terms employed in the enunciation of that doctrine are not to be regarded as merely figurative expressions, borrowed from the Mosaic ritual, but as applicable to their subject in a much larger and more proper sense than any of which they are capable when descriptive only of the sacrifices ordained by the law; for, between those sacrifices and that of our Redeemer, there subsists, at the same time, a close analogy of circumstance and an immeasurable difference of proportion.

Finally, that the humiliation and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, although required by the divine holiness and justice, is not to be regarded as that which *rendered* God placable, but as a *means for saving mankind*, ordained by the Father himself, and voluntarily submitted to by the Son, *in consequence of their common attribute of mercy or love—a love embracing the whole human race in all ages of the world.*

Now, although a crucified Redeemer is thus clearly revealed to us as the appointed channel of the mercies of God to man, such is the perverseness of our hearts, that we are naturally prone to reject him, and even to account the "blood of the covenant" an "unholy thing." As it was in the days of the apostle Paul, so it is now—Christ crucified offends the pride of the Jew, and mortifies the false wisdom of the Greek: 1 Cor. i. 23. How many persons are there, whose self-righteousness is far too little broken down to admit of their accepting that divine plan of redemption which involves their own total humiliation, inasmuch as it assumes that they are justly liable to the divine displeasure, absolutely devoid of merit, and destitute of all capacity to be saved, except through the righteousness of *another!* And how many are there also who virtually permit themselves to sit in judgment on the ways of an all-wise Providence, and who reject the method which God has ordained for our salvation, because it is strange and extraordinary—improbable, in the estimate of a short-sighted and misapplied philosophy!

To all such opposers of a crucified Redeemer may be addressed the remark, that humility lies at the very foundation of Christian virtue; for, until the pride of man is brought low, and until he is taught to view himself as he really is—*vile and polluted in the sight of God*—he builds his hopes of happiness on a *mere falsity*, and will never lay hold of those principles which can alone effect his moral regeneration. It is, therefore, a circumstance which lessens not, but plainly *increases*, the weight and authority of the Christian doctrine of atonement, that it levels with the dust all our high pretensions to natural righteousness. In assuming the moral worthlessness and actual demerit of fallen man, it assumes an undeniable truth; and one which can never be too clearly apprehended, or too deeply felt.

And, secondly, with respect to the improbability and unreasonableness (in the view of human wisdom) of the scheme of reconciliation through a crucified Saviour, it is plain that these form no solid objection

to our doctrine; because that alone is *truly* unreasonable, which is contrary to reason; and nothing can fairly be deemed to be contrary to reason which is so obviously placed above and beyond its scope. It is, indeed, infinitely absurd for any man to inculpate the counsels of an all-wise and almighty Being, and to insinuate that the method which he has chosen, for our salvation, is not the holiest and the most efficacious of methods. A due sense of the narrow limits of our own intellectual powers, and of the unsearchable "depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God," would for ever prevent such vain impiety.

If, then, the inquiry is raised in the mind of the reader, *Why* this particular method was ordained for our salvation? the reply is obvious—Because it was the best possible method—for the counsels and operations of divine wisdom and love must surely be allowed to have one uniform tendency to that which is *best*. Again, it may be replied, that the acts of God, unlike those of his frail and comparatively powerless creatures, are often infinitely prolific; and the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son may have had innumerable results of which we know nothing, and to all of which it might, nevertheless, be *peculiarly* and *perfectly* adapted.

For us it suffices that our own salvation is thus provided for, and that the provision so made is CLEARLY REVEALED TO US in the Holy Scriptures. To believe in the truth as it is in Jesus, and with all willingness of spirit to accept a crucified Redeemer as our only hope of glory, is at once our unquestionable duty and our highest privilege. It may not, however, be improper, under the guidance of Scripture, to point out two moral and practical purposes which are conspicuously answered by *this particular method* of salvation—purposes which are in themselves sufficient to unravel (to a very great extent) the mysteries of the atonement. The first of them is adverted to by the apostle Paul, who, in a passage already cited from his Epistle to the Romans, declares that God "hath set forth" Christ "to be a propitiation, through faith in

his blood, that he might be JUST, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus:" iii. 25, 26. The word *just*, in this passage, I conceive to be of a very comprehensive import, relating to that inherent righteousness or holiness of the Supreme Being, which requires the maintenance, in all its purity and perfection, of the true *standard* of the moral law, and which utterly rejects and renounces all manner of iniquity. This inherent righteousness or holiness, is inscribed for our instruction (and it may be for the instruction of the whole universe) in the brightest and most conspicuous characters, on the doctrine of the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ; not only because, while the sinner was forgiven, the penalty of sin was exacted, but because the burden of that penalty was borne by no less a person than the SON OF GOD.

For, if the Son of God himself (who, in the divine nature, is one with the Father) could alone be accepted as a sacrifice to purge away sin, it is evident, that sin, in the sight of the Almighty, is an evil of infinite malignity; nor is it possible for us to conceive any other method by which its malignity could have been so clearly, so powerfully, and so *beneficially*, displayed and demonstrated. And such is proved by experience to be the actual operation of this fundamental doctrine of Christianity; for, it may, I believe, be uniformly observed, that the more just and comprehensive the views of men are respecting the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ, the fuller and clearer is their apprehension also of the depth and demerit of *sin*.

Such an apprehension must surely be regarded as of primary and essential use *in the formation of the Christian character;* and of equal importance to that *true end* of all our religion is a due sense of the immeasurable love of God in sending his only-begotten Son into the world—of the immeasurable love of Christ in sacrificing *himself* for us. Here, then, is the second moral and practical purpose to which I would direct the attention of the reader; for *such* a method of effecting our salvation is evidently, in the very highest degree, calculated to excite our ardent

thankfulness, and by the holiest of motives to induce the unqualified surrender of ourselves to the will of God. If the Father, in his gratuitous compassion, has, indeed, bestowed upon us the unspeakable gift of his own Son—if we are assured, that "with him also" he will "*freely* give us *all things*"—how shall we refuse to offer unto God the acceptable return of a faithful and undivided heart? If THE SON has, indeed, assumed our suffering nature—has, indeed, bled and died on the cross, a sacrifice for our sins—how shall we not feel bound, by every tie of love, duty, honour, and gratitude, to obey his law, to promote his cause, and to devote ourselves to his service?

PART II.

ON THE MERITS AND ADVOCACY OF CHRIST.

The Scripture doctrines of *atonement*, and of the *merits* of Jesus Christ, are so intimately interwoven, and are, in some respects, so very nearly identical, that we had need exercise peculiar caution when we attempt to draw any thing like systematic distinctions between them. It may, indeed, be justly said, that when Jesus Christ offered himself up on the cross a voluntary sacrifice for sin, he thereby *merited* all the blessed consequences by which that sacrifice has been followed. Nevertheless, a few observations respecting the *righteousness of Christ* will, I trust, serve to add clearness and completeness to the view which we are now endeavouring to take of the redemption of mankind.

It is a position very plainly laid down by the apostle Paul, that we are *justified* by faith in Christ *without the deeds of the law;* (Rom. iii. 28;) or, in other words, (elsewhere adopted by him,) that, "without works," "*righteousness*" is "*imputed*" to the believer in Jesus: Rom. iv. 6, 11. Now, on a comparison of this position with other scriptural declarations, of some of which the apostle is himself the author, it is easy to perceive that the righteousness imputed to the

Christian is no imaginary innocence and virtue, but the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ himself; for it is Jesus who is described, by the prophets, as the "Lord *our* righteousness:" Jer. xxiii. 6: *comp.* Isa. xlv. 24, 25. *Christ Jesus* is made *unto us* of the Father, "*righteousness* and redemption:" 1 Cor. i. 30. "God hath made *him* to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might *be made the righteousness of God* IN HIM:" 2 Cor. v. 21. Again, the apostle says. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of *the gift of righteousness*, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.....As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the *righteousness of one*,[7] (the free gift) came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the *obedience* of one shall many be made righteous:" Rom. v. 17—19: *comp.* x. 3. 4.

In what, then, did the righteousness of our Saviour consist? That Jesus Christ was perfectly devoid of sin, is a truth which the sacred writers have promulgated with equal clearness and frequency. Although tempted in all points like as we are, he was "without sin:" Heb. iv. 15. He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:" 1 Peter ii. 22. He "knew no sin:" 2 Cor. v. 21. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners:" Heb. vii. 26. He was, as distinguished from all other men, the "*Holy One*" of God: Luke iv. 34: Acts iii. 14. Such expressions are too clear in themselves to admit of mistake or perversion; and the fulness and perfection of their meaning is amply evinced by the collateral consideration, that it was only on the principle of his being himself "without blemish and without spot," that Jesus could possibly be accepted as a *sacrifice for sin*: 1 Peter i. 19: *comp.* Lev. xxii.

[7] Rom. v. 18. δι' ἑνὸς δικαιώματος. Δικαίωμα, in verse 18, corresponds with ὑπακόη in verse 19; and, as Schleusner observes, denotes *an obedience to the divine will—a perfect holiness and virtue*: *vide lex. in voc., No.* 3.

20, &c. Perfectly *innocent* therefore was this Lamb of God. When, however, we find the sacred writers dwelling on the *righteousness* of Jesus Christ; when we observe it to be declared by them, that he is the "righteous branch;" (Jer. xxiii. 5) "the king of righteousness;" (Heb. vii. 2) "the sun of righteousness;" (Mal. iv. 2)—that he came to fulfil "all righteousness;" (Matt. iii. 15; *comp.* v. 17)—that "righteousness" was "the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins;" (Isa. xi. 5) we must surely receive their doctrine on the subject as declarative, not only of his freedom from all sin, but of his positive, active, and ever-abounding piety, justice, charity, and virtue—the whole constituting a *perfect obedience* to the law and will of God. That obedience is emphatically mentioned by the apostle Paul; (Rom. v. 18, 19: Heb. v. 8, 9) it characterized every particular of our Lord's moral conduct, was maintained by him unbroken through a long course of unspeakable humiliation and suffering, and was finally consummated in his cruel and shameful death.

Such was the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; and such is the righteousness, therefore, which, through faith, *is imputed to the Christian.* A very slight degree of reflection on the divine nature and infinite dignity of the Son of God, as well as on the perfections of his human character, may serve to convince us that as, on the one hand, he was, on account of his apostle's innocence, entirely suited to be a sacrifice for sin, so, on the other hand, his fulfilment of the whole moral law, and more especially his obedience unto death, were infinitely meritorious in the sight of God the Father. When, therefore, we read that the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to the believer, we may reasonably understand such a doctrine to import, that we are not only saved through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but rewarded through *his merits.* *Our* sinfulness may properly be said to have been *imputed* to Christ, because, when he underwent the penalty which that sinfulness demanded, he was dealt with as if he had been him-

self the sinner; and it is, I apprehend, on a perfectly analogous principle that *his* righteousness is said to be imputed to us; because, through the boundless mercy of God, *we* are permitted to reap the fruits of it. *We* are regarded as if, like him, we were absolutely guiltless, and are, *therefore*, delivered from everlasting punishment. *We* are graciously accepted, as if, like him, we had meritoriously fulfilled the whole law of God; and are, *therefore*, rewarded with never-ending felicity. Thus it is, that, in consequence of his *union through faith with Jesus, the Head of the Church*, the Christian is not only protected from the pains of hell, but is in possession of a well-grounded *claim* on the joys of heaven. Thus it is that "grace" reigns "*through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord:*" Rom. v. 21.

As the blood of Christ is effectual for the cleansing away of the believer's guilt, and his righteousness all-sufficient for meriting the believer's reward, so it is another most important feature in the glad tidings of the Christian dispensation, that Christ is himself the unfailing protector and *advocate* of his people.

Such an office, he maintained, with a perfect consistency, during his continuance on earth. The little company of his faithful disciples were, in his presence, safe from every danger. He led them about, he instructed them, he gathered them under his sheltering wing; he defended them from the power of their enemies, so that no evil befel them; (*see* John xvii. 12;) and, more especially, he poured forth on their behalf, and on behalf of all those who should afterwards believe in his name, his effectual and *authoritative* petitions before the Father's throne of grace. "*I pray not for the world,*" said Jesus, in that solemn supplication which appears to have concluded the course of his ministry, "but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine"..... "neither pray I for these alone, but for *them also which shall believe on me through their word:*" John xvii. 9, 20. Such was our Lord's description of the persons on whose behalf his prayer was offered. And what was that prayer?

that the Father would keep them in his own name—"keep them from the evil"—sanctify them through his truth—bind them together in the fellowship of the Gospel—bring them into a holy union one with another, in the Father and the Son—and, finally, receive them into that glory which was laid up for Jesus himself, in the mansions of bliss. "Father," he said, "*I will* that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me:" ver. 24.

But, the *advocacy* of Jesus was far indeed from being restricted to the period of his mortal humiliation; he continues to exercise the same gracious office in the kingdom of his glory. "If any man sin," said the apostle John to the catholic church, at a period subsequent to the ascension of Jesus,—"If any man sin, we have an *advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" 1 John ii. 1. In this respect, as well as in many others, "God hath begotten us again unto a *lively hope* by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;" (1 Pet. i. 3;) and we may well adopt the language of the apostle Paul: "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we *shall be saved by his life:*" Rom. v. 10. Jesus Christ was not only "delivered for our offences," but "was raised again for our *justification:*" iv. 25. Having for ever put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, "the Great Prince which *standeth* for the children of the Lord's people," (Dan. xii. 1) hath entered, "not into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, *now to appear in the presence of God for us:*" Heb. ix. 24.

The office of an *advocate* or *patron*, in ancient times, was one of great importance. He was the *perpetual protector* of his client; and, as occasion required, he was always ready to defend his cause, to confute and rebuke his accuser, or to intercede for his pardon: and Jesus, in his priestly and mediatorial character, is the advocate of his people, because he is ever engaged in protecting them from danger, in counteracting the accusations of their cruel adversary, in pleading

their cause, and in offering intercession for them to the Father Almighty. He is the perfect anti-type of the high-priest of the ancient Hebrews, respecting whom we read as follows: "And Aaron *shall bear the names of the children of Israel*, in the breast-plate of judgment, upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord, continually. And thou shalt put into the breast-plate of judgment the Urim and the Thummin; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before the Lord; and Aaron *shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart, before the Lord, continually:*" Exod. xxviii. 29, 30.

That Jesus Christ, who is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec—the king of righteousness, and the king of peace—is enthroned at the right hand of the Father, and there presides perpetually, as a sure protector and defender, over the house of God, the whole family of believers, is a doctrine which has been fully considered in a former Essay, and on which, therefore, we need not now insist.

That he rebukes and confounds the accuser of his brethren is unquestionable, on the general principle that it is he who bruises the serpent's head, and destroys "the works of the devil:" 1 John iii. 8. "The Lord rebuke thee," said the Angel of the Covenant to Satan, when the latter was accusing Joshua the priest—"The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" and to Joshua, who was standing before him, "clothed in filthy garments," he said, "Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment:" Zech. iii. 1—4. May we not collect from this remarkable narration, that the mighty Advocate, who still pleads for his people against their malicious adversary, rests their defence on the atonement made by his own blood-shedding, and graciously covers them with the spotless robe of his own righteousness? Thus it is that the blessings, which Christ died to purchase, *he lives to apply*.

Finally, that his perpetual intercession is offered on

our account to the Father Almighty, and is all-availing for the safety of his faithful followers, both here and hereafter, is to be concluded on the clearest scriptural evidence. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" said the apostle Paul in the triumphant language of Christian confidence — "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, *who also maketh intercession for us.*" Rom. viii. 33, 34. "This (man) because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM:" Heb. vii. 24, 25. Having cited these explicit and powerful passages, I have now, in conclusion, to remark, that the intercession of Christ has not only its own direct efficacy, but is the means of procuring acceptance for the prayers of his people. "The spiritual sacrifices" of the church on earth are "acceptable to God, *by* Jesus Christ;" (1 Pet. ii. 5;) and we may reasonably conclude, that our almighty Intercessor was represented by the angel in the Apocalypse, who appeared in *the character of a priest*, standing before the altar with a golden censer in his hand. "And there was given unto him," said the apostle, "*much incense*, that he should offer it *with the prayers of all saints* upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel's hand!" Rev. viii. 3, 4. The prayers of the saints are offered by the Redeemer on the altar of God—but that which alone imparts to them the fragrance of a sweet-smelling savour, and renders them acceptable to God, our heavenly Father, is the incense in which they are enveloped—the incense of the intercession of the Redeemer himself.

On a brief review, then, of the contents of the present section, we may recollect, first, that the righteousness declared to be imputed to the believer in Jesus, is the righteousness of Jesus himself; that this righteousness consisted in his absolute freedom from sin, and in his perfect and meritorious fulfilment of the law

of God; that it is said to be imputed to Christians, because, in virtue of their union by faith with the great Head of the Church, *they* reap the fruits of it; for they are not only saved from hell, as if they were as innocent as Christ, but are rewarded with heaven, as if, like Christ, they had perfectly fulfilled the law. Secondly, that he who thus procured for us, by his own blood-shedding and obedience, the gift of eternal life, is our never-failing defender and advocate at the right hand of God; that, as he protected his people, and prayed for them while he was with them on earth, so now, in the glory of his kingdom, he is ever engaged in our support and defence, in answering and rebuking our adversary, in presenting and perfecting our prayers, and in saving us by his own continual and all-powerful intercession.

What, then, are the practical lessons to be deduced from these scriptural doctrines? They are lessons of hope, and joy, and encouragement. When we are humbled before God in the view of our own imperfect services, let us cast ourselves on his mercy, and *repose* on the righteousness of our Redeemer! When we are surrounded with many conflicts—when Satan is desiring to "*sift*" *us as* "*wheat*"—let us remember the gracious words of Jesus to Peter, "I HAVE PRAYED FOR THEE that thy faith fail not:" Luke xxii. 31, 32. Let us console ourselves with the well-grounded assurance, that, as long as we are humbly endeavouring to persevere in the faith and patience of the saints, so long are we the subjects of an advocacy not to be defeated, and of an intercession all-effectual for our help and salvation!

PART III.

ON THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF THE SPIRIT.

IN the view which, in a former Essay, we took of mankind in their unregenerate condition, we traced the sure evidences both of their moral darkness and of their moral death. Man without grace (whether

he is possessed of outward information or not) is, in the first place, devoid of any profitable, saving, knowledge of God and his truth; and, in the second place, he is "alienated" by his wickedness from "the life of God," and "dead in trespasses and sins."

Although, therefore, the Supreme Being has graciously provided for our *indemnity*, through the sacrifice, and for our *eternal happiness*, through the merits, of his Son, it is nevertheless certain, that no man can be saved while he continues in his carnal state—in his original, fallen, condition. Those who are still sitting "in darkness, and under the shadow of death," are destitute of all *capacity* "for an inheritance with the saints *in light*." Those whose spirits are defiled and polluted, and whose *prevailing* tendency is to wrath, malice, envy, lasciviousness, or coveteousness, are even here "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," and unfit for all communion with their God and Father. Much less are they prepared to participate in the pure joys of the glorified church—in the society of just men *made perfect*—in the immediate presence of the Lamb—*in* the fulness of the love and glory of Jehovah.

These reflections may enable us to comprehend the emphatic doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, a doctrine of universal application to the fallen children of Adam—that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"—that "except a man be born of water and *of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Our Lord was pleased to follow up these memorable sayings with an explanatory declaration:—"That," said he, "which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.—Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth—so is every one that is born of the Spirit:" John iii. 3, 5, 6—8. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The natural man does but produce the natural man, for no man can "bring a clean thing out of an unclean;" (Job xiv. 4;) the son inherits the nature of his father; and from generation to generation are perpetuated (as

all experience and history teach us) the infirmity and corruption of the human species. But there is provided for us, in the economy of the grace of God, an invisible, intangible, though not always imperceptible, influence—an illuminating, quickening, principle—by which degenerate man is born a second time—morally changed—introduced to a new condition of life, and gradually restored to the image of his Creator.

Now, respecting this enlightening and restoring principle, to the existence of which the Scriptures bear so full and frequent a testimony, it is necessary for us to lay down two primary positions—the first, that it is supernatural, and comes only from God—the second, that it is derived to us through that crucified Saviour, who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

I. The Christian needs not to be reminded that *all* our possessions and *all* our powers are derived from the sole bounty of that almighty and most merciful Being who is the Author of every good and perfect gift—that it is he *alone* who bestows upon us those various bodily and mental endowments, by which we are qualified for occupying our own rank in the scale of creation. Nevertheless, between these endowments, such as the faculties of reason, reflection, memory, and speech, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, there is this essential distinction—that the former belong to the constitution of our nature, and, as such, are received by generation and inheritance; while the latter is a heavenly boon—freely offered indeed to *all* who are willing to receive it—and yet not inherent in our nature, but imparted *supernaturally* by the Lord of all things, *when*, *where*, and *as* he pleases.

Nothing is more clearly revealed in Holy Writ than that essential principle of our religion, that in *us*, that is to say, in our flesh (or *natural man*), "there dwelleth no good thing,"—that by grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, for it is "the gift of God,"—that "it is God who worketh" in us "to will and to do of his good pleasure,"—that the influence by which alone we are enabled to produce the acceptable fruits of righteousness is not of *our* spirit, but of

the Spirit of JEHOVAH,—that it is he who sheds that influence on his unworthy children, according to his sovereign will,—his own free, unmerited, unrestricted, mercy.

There is scarcely a passage in Scripture, relating to the Spirit, which may not be said to involve a proof of the absolute freedom and divine origin of the gift of it. The subject is never treated of in the Bible *on any other principle.* Nevertheless, it may not be improper for us, in reference to the present point, to examine, first, the language of ancient Hebrew prophecy, and, secondly, some of the declarations of Jesus Christ and his apostles.

That the servants of God, before the coming of Christ, were the children of grace, and were actuated, in their life and conversation, by the Holy Spirit, is evident from the tenor of their history; and that many of them received those extraordinary spiritual endowments, which fitted them for the peculiar office of prophets, may be proved, not only by that history, but by the express doctrine of the apostle, that these "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:" 2 Pet. i. 21. But, among the prophecies which they were thus led to utter and to record, there are not a few from which we learn, that the dispensation of Christianity was to be attended by a yet more abundant and extensive effusion of the Spirit of God, both as the sanctifier of the souls of men and as the imparter of those peculiar gifts which are directed to the establishment and enlargement of the church of God. And these promises were all issued in the name of our Heavenly Father, who alone is described, by his inspired servants, as the [illegible] and dispenser of this sacred and powerful influence—a remark which applies, with equal exactness, to the spirit of *grace*, and to the spirit of *prophecy*.

The former is promised, as the most conspicuous privilege of the Christian church, the children of Israel by faith, in the following memorable passage: "The palaces shall be forsaken: the multitude of the city shall be left, &c. &c.;" (in other words, the

church of God shall continue desolate) "until the Spirit be poured upon us *from on high*, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. *Then* judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field, and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and *the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever:*" Isaiah xxxii. 14—17. It cannot, with any reason be doubted, that the application of this prophecy is to the times of the Messiah, which the ancient Hebrews were instructed to expect as the times of *restoration;* and soon afterwards, the same promise was repeated by the evangelical prophet, as follows: "Thus saith the Lord that made thee and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee, Fear not, O Jacob my servant, and thou Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my SPIRIT upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring:" Isaiah xliv. 2, 3. Nor was it to be merely for the refreshment of the weary, but more especially for the regeneration and purification of the vile and sinful, that the Spirit of God was to be imparted. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you," said Jehovah to his people, by the prophet Ezekiel, "and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them:" Ezekiel xxxvi. 25—27.

In these prophecies there is a clear description of the effusion of a divine influence for the production of spiritual consolation and moral righteousness; and that effusion is attributed to no other source than the spontaneous mercy of our Heavenly Father. In language not dissimilar it is declared, that he would also in the last days—that is, in the days of Christianity—pour forth of his Spirit, in the distribution of gifts for the use and edification of the church—"and it

shall come to pass afterward (or *in the last day: see* Acts ii. 17) that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions, and also upon the servants, and upon the handmaids, in those days will I pour out my Spirit:" Joel ii. 28, 29: *compare* Isaiah lix. 21: Ezekiel xi. 19: xxxvii. 12—14: Zech. xii. 10, &c.

Such was the frequent language of inspiration before the coming of Christ, and it is not to be forgotten that these prophecies respecting the Spirit were accompanied by a variety of typical ordinances (imposed on the Jews "until the time of reformation") which were evidently shadows of the essential doctrine of a spiritual influence, just as the sacrificial rites of the law were the shadows of the essential doctrine of atonement by the death of Christ. This fact is established with sufficient precision, first, by the general declaration of the apostle Paul, that the ceremonies of the Jewish law (in which he specifically includes "divers washings") were "a shadow of good things to come;" and secondly, by the frequent use which, in declaring the operations of the Spirit, the sacred writers have made of metaphorical expressions derived from those ceremonies. The holy oil so commonly poured forth on individuals who were destined to occupy important stations in the civil and religious polity of the Jewish theocracy was an admirable type of that divine "unction," without which (under the Christian dispensation more especially) none can be prepared and sanctified for the work and service of God; and the clean water in which the defiled Israelites were commanded on many occasions to wash their clothes and bathe their flesh, afforded a simple, yet very significant, representation of that pure Spirit of truth and righteousness, which is ever found sufficient to purify the soul of the believer in Jesus from the stain and pollution of sin.

The prophecies and types which we have now been engaged in considering were not, in their full measure, accomplished during the life of Jesus Christ on earth. So long as he continued personally with his disciples,

those more plentiful effusions of the Divine Spirit, which are evidently alluded to by the prophets as one leading distinction of the Gospel dispensation, were not required for the instruction and help of the infant church; and it was on this ground that Jesus declared to his followers the *expediency* of his leaving them. "It is expedient for you," said he, "that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you:" John xvi. 7. And, on a previous occasion, when he made mention of the "rivers of living water," which were to flow for the strength and refreshment of all believers in him, he spake (as the apostle assures us) of the "Holy Ghost," which "was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified:" John vii. 39. In point of fact, as the Messiah himself was the principal object of expectation held out to the ancient Hebrews, during the continuance of the law, so the promise which chiefly distinguished the introduction of the Gospel was *the promise of the Holy Ghost.*

After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, this promise began to receive its fulfilment. The Spirit was poured forth in abundance on the whole company of the disciples, and, while their mouths were opened in the miraculous exercise of the prophetic gift, their hearts were inflamed and purified, and filled with the love of God and man. Thus were the earliest followers of Jesus "baptized with the Holy Ghost," and a similar experience, as far as it is required either for the salvation of souls, or for the order and maintenance of the church on earth, is ordained to be, in every age, the help and consolation of true believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. "The promise is unto you," cried Peter to the surrounding multitude, "and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call:" Acts ii. 39.

Now, even on a very cursory examination of these, and many other corresponding passages of the New Testament, it is impossible for us not to perceive that the influence thus promised, and thus bestowed, was entirely *divine*—that it came, and ever must come,

from God himself, who imparts the celestial gift to his degenerate children, in the character both of an omnipotent Sovereign, and of a tender, adopting, Parent. The Comforter, who was to be sent to the disciples after the death, resurrection, and ascension, of their Lord, and who was to "testify" unto them of Christ, is declared by Jesus "to be the Spirit of Truth which *proceedeth from the Father;*" (John xv. 26) and the promise of his coming is emphatically described as the PROMISE OF THE FATHER: Luke xxiv. 49: Acts i. 4.

Whether, therefore, the effect of a spiritual influence is traced in the diffusion of those gifts which are exercised by *some* of the Lord's servants, for the conversion of mankind, and for the benefit of the church; or in the peace, the love, and the purity, of *all* the members of the body of Christ, the children of the kingdom are still destitute of any thing whereof they can boast. Such an influence appertains not to the unregenerate nature of man, and although it acts upon the creature, who is required and graciously enabled to cooperate with it, it is nevertheless exclusively and *supernaturally* the GIFT OF GOD.

II. As God the Father is himself the fountain from which the Holy Spirit flows, for the instruction, the regeneration, and the salvation of his fallen children, so it is a clear and frequent doctrine of Holy Writ, that this incomparable blessing is derived to mankind, *through Jesus Christ.* "For we ourselves also," says the apostle Paul to Titus, "were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly *through Jesus Christ our Saviour*, that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life:" iii. 3—7.

The Son or Word of God, by whom all things

were made, is that "true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"—the light which "shineth in darkness" though "the darkness comprehended it not." "*In him was light, and the light was the life of men:*" John i. 4, 5, 9. "I am the light of the world," cried Jesus, "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the *light of life:*" John viii. 12. When we regard our Saviour in the character of the Incarnate One, who publicly revealed the will of the Father, and the doctrines of Divine Truth, we may gratefully acknowledge that, even in this respect, he was the light of mankind, the light of the world. But the analogy of Scripture affords substantial evidence that these expressions comprehend a further meaning, and that Christ is also the light of his rational creature, man, because it is *by him*, or through his intervention and mediation, that the *soul* of man is *spiritually* enlightened. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined *in our hearts*, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, *in the* FACE of JESUS CHRIST:" 2 Cor. iv. 6. Jesus Christ is made unto us of God, "*wisdom*" as well as "righteousness:" 1 Cor. i. 30. He is himself the "wisdom of God:" ver. 24. "In *him* are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!" Col. ii. 3.

Now, as Jesus is the internal illuminator, so he is also the spiritual quickener of mankind. "The last Adam (was made) a *quickening Spirit:*" 1 Cor. xv. 45. This doctrine I conceive to have been plainly alluded to by our Saviour, in that memorable conversation, in which he presented himself to the attention of his followers, and of the Jews, as the Bread of God—the Bread of Life: *see* John vi. "For the Bread of God," said the Holy One of Israel, "is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth LIFE unto the world; (ver. 33).....the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the LIFE of the world:" ver. 51. Through faith in a crucified Redeemer, the true Christian lives for ever, and lives *now;* for while the gift of eternal happiness is laid up for him in the world to come, he is, even in this

world, quickened by the Spirit, from his death in trespasses and sins; and his spiritual life *here*, is the natural and indispensable fountain of his everlasting life hereafter. The apostle John makes mention of believers, as of persons who are already "passed from death unto life;" (1 John iii. 14) and that the spiritual life of the soul, as well as the happy eternity of which it is the spring, was truly, on this occasion, the subject of our Lord's discourse, we may learn from the explanatory declaration with which he was pleased to follow up his doctrine—"It is the Spirit that quickeneth (or *maketh alive*:[8]) the flesh profiteth nothing:" ver. 63.

The doctrine which Jesus himself was thus engaged in promulgating—a doctrine which was indeed the frequent topic of his preaching (*comp.* John iv. 14; v. 24, 26, 40; x. 10; xi. 25)—is admirably elucidated in the following passage of the epistle of Paul to the Romans: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, *God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin*, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:" viii. 1—4. And again, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is *life*, because of righteousness:" ver. 10: *compare* Gal. iii. 13, 14.

What, then, is the truth which is taught us in these passages of Scripture? It is, I apprehend, plainly this: that the incarnation, humiliation, and death, of Jesus Christ, who gave his "flesh" (that is, *his body on the cross*) "for the *life* of the world," were the means ordained of the Father, in his own infinite love and wisdom, not only for our indemnity, but for our cure—not only for the purging away of our guilt, and

[8] τὸ ζωοποιοῦν.

the removal of our punishment, but for our restoration to the enjoyment of that divine influence by which alone we live unto God, and are enabled to walk before him "in all holy conversation and godliness." The sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, may be regarded as a *price paid*, in pursuance of the counsels of the Father, not only for the redemption of sinners, but for the outpouring of the Spirit on the church universal. It was the crucified and risen Emanuel, who, when "he ascended up on high, led captivity captive," and "*received gifts for men:*" Psalm lxviii. 18: *comp.* Eph. iv. 8. Such was the doctrine delivered by the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, which was distinguished by so abundant an effusion of the Holy Ghost. After adverting to the crucifixion of our Lord, he added, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses: therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having *received* of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear:" Acts ii. 32, 33.

The Holy Spirit (as we have already found occasion to remark) is declared in Scripture to be the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of the Son of God: Rom. viii. 9: Gal. iv. 6, &c. He suffered and died on earth, that he might obtain for mankind this celestial boon; and, having obtained it, he freely dispenses it to his followers, in his own divine authority and power, for their instruction, their consolation, and their sanctification. He sends the Comforter to his disciples to guide them in the way of righteousness, and to teach them the knowledge of his truth: John xv. 26. He baptizes the true believer "with the Holy Ghost and with fire:" Matt. iii. 11. He sits "as a refiner and purifier of silver," that he may "purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver:" Mal. iii. 3. He loved the church, "and *gave himself for it*, that he might *sanctify* and *cleanse* it with the washing of water by the word—that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish:" Eph. v. 26, 27. (Christ),

"gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works:" Titus ii. 14.

On the whole, then, it is plain and undeniable, that the Spirit of truth and righteousness is bestowed upon mankind, through the sole mediation of Jesus Christ. And, now, in bringing this point of our subject to its conclusion, I would venture to entreat the reader's attention to the close and intimate association subsisting between two great doctrines of Christianity, which may indeed be rightly distinguished, but can never be rightly separated—justification through the blood of Christ, and sanctification through his Spirit. In Scripture, these doctrines are very generally treated of *conjointly*. Both are represented, by the sacred writers, as essential to the work of salvation: both as originating in the boundless mercy of the Father; and both as arising immediately out of the *sacrifice of the Son of God*. Was Christ "set forth" of the Father to be "a propitiation through faith in his blood?" Did he "bear our sins in his own body on the tree?" Did he thus *give himself* for us? It was not only for the remission of sins that are past, and for the justification of penitent believers, but also "that he might *sanctify and cleanse*" his church—"that he might redeem us *from all iniquity*"—that "our conscience" might be purged "from dead works *to serve the living God*"—"that we, being dead to sin, should *live unto righteousness*:" Heb. ix. 14: 1 Pet. ii. 24. It is much to be desired that a holy caution should more and more prevail among Christians, lest, by dwelling on either of these doctrines, to *the exclusion of the other*, they should lose the *balance* of divine truth; for, although persons who are accustomed to commit this dangerous practical error may participate in *some* of the joys, and experience *some* of the virtue, of true religion, they cannot fail to fall very short of a just apprehension and satisfying enjoyment of the beauty, the harmony, and the completeness, of the Gospel dispensation.

Having thus examined the evidences of Scripture respecting the nature and origin of the *regenerating principle*, and having ascertained the channel through

which alone it is derived to mankind, we may now direct our remarks to the Holy Spirit in *his divine and personal character*, and may proceed briefly to consider the scriptural account of his operations, in furtherance and completion of the glorious plan appointed for our Redemption.

I. Let us, in the first place, consider these operations, as they have relation to the person and offices of the Messiah himself.

It is a doctrine of Scripture, familiar to all who are acquainted with the first elements of Christian truth, that the incarnation of the Son of God was effected through the instrumentality of this divine Agent. "The HOLY GHOST shall come upon thee," said the angel to Mary, "and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God:" Luke i. 35. Again, after the miraculous conception had taken place, the angel said to Joseph, her espoused husband, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the HOLY GHOST:" Matt. i. 20.

Conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of a woman, Jesus Christ, at the very commencement of his ministry, himself received the Spirit from on high. Immediately after he had submitted to the baptism of John, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God descended "like a dove," and lighted upon him, and a voice was, at the same time, heard from heaven—even the voice of the Father—saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:" Matt. iii. 16, 17. This wonderful incident in our Lord's history, may serve to elucidate the frequent doctrine of the New Testament, that Jesus was *the Christ* or *the Anointed One* of the Father—a doctrine which perfectly coincides with the records of ancient Hebrew prophecy. "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear

of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth," &c. xi. 1—4. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me," said the Messiah, by the mouth of the same prophet; "because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, and to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God;—to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified:" lxi. 1—3: *comp.* xliii. 1; Dan. ix. 24; Luke iv. 18; Acts x. 38. "He whom God hath sent," said the Baptist of his divine Successor, "speaketh the words of God: *for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him:*" John iii. 34.

From the passages now cited, we learn that Jesus Christ was, in the most eminent manner, anointed by the Holy Spirit for his work and ministry on earth: and by the same Spirit he was anointed also for that priestly and regal office in which he presides for ever over his church universal. "The kings of the earth set themselves," says the Psalmist, "and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his ANOINTED ..... I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee!" ii. 2—7. Again, in another psalm, we read; "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity: therefore God, thy God, hath *anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows:*" xlv. 6, 7: *comp.* Heb. i. 5, 8; v. 5.

Now, I conceive, that the immeasurable communications made to Jesus of a spiritual influence, are to be regarded, not *merely* as divine gifts bestowed on

his human nature, but *also* as the necessary and practical result of that perfect union of design, of operation, and of essence, which subsists between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Finally, then, it remains for us to observe, that as, by these immeasurable communications, the Holy Spirit cooperated with the Messiah in the execution of his offices, as a Prophet, a Priest, and a King, so were they effectual also in promoting the accomplishment of that stupendous act in which the whole dispensation centred. It was "THROUGH THE ETERNAL SPIRIT,"[9] as we are assured by an apostle, that the INCARNATE SON "OFFERED HIMSELF WITHOUT SPOT TO GOD:" Heb. ix. 14.

II. The Holy Spirit who thus essentially contributed to the redemption of mankind, by effecting the incarnation and assisting the sacrifice of the Messiah, as well as by anointing him for his various mediatorial offices, is also of the Father's unmerited bounty, freely bestowed on the Messiah's "seed"—that is to say, on the true, living, universal, church of Christ. "As for me, this is my covenant with them, (saith Jehovah to his Christ); my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed from henceforth and for ever:" Isaiah lix. 21. The promise was not only to the Messiah himself, but to his disciples—and not only to him and his immediate disciples, but (as we have already noticed) to their children, and their children's children—to all that are afar off—to as many as the Lord our God shall call: Acts ii. 39. What then are declared in Scripture to be the operations of the Spirit of Truth in the *church* of Jesus Christ?

Reason demonstrates that God exists; and his wisdom, his power, and his love, are manifested at

[9] Heb. ix. 14—διὰ Πνεύματος αἰωνίου. That the *Holy Spirit* is here expressed by the Greek Πνεῦμα, can scarcely admit of a reasonable doubt. The use of the preposition accounts for the omission of the article: *see Bishop Middleton Doct. Gr. Art. in loc.*

once in the works of his creation, and in the order of his providence. But that which alone makes known his attributes to us in the *fulness* of their beauty and harmony, and which, at the same time satisfactorily develops our relations towards him, and his dealings towards us, is unquestionably *revelation*. Now, whatsoever external light and knowledge respecting God and his truth is derived to us through the medium of revelation, is plainly to be attributed to the influence and operation of the Holy Spirit, who not only dwelt immeasurably in Jesus Christ, but filled and animated the patriarchs, the prophets, the evangelists, and the apostles, qualifying them for their service, dictating their predictions, and inspiring all their doctrine. We are assured by the apostle Peter, that it was the Spirit of Christ in the ancient Israelitish prophets, which "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow:" 1 Pet. i. 11. "My speech and my preaching," said Paul to the Corinthians, "was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:" 1 Cor. ii. 4. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God: which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the *Holy Ghost teacheth*:" 12, 13, &c.

As the ministry of the apostles and their followers was inspired by the Holy Ghost, so were they qualified by the Spirit to be instruments in the working of those miracles, by which the *divine origin of their doctrine was publicly demonstrated to the world*. Whatsoever gifts indeed have been at any time bestowed on the Lord's servants, for the establishment and maintenance of the church on earth, they are all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning

of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will:" 1 Cor. xii. 7—11.

If, then, the true church of Jesus Christ on earth (composed as it is of all real Christians under whatsoever name) is, in a certain limited sense, the "pillar and ground of the truth;" (1 Tim. iii. 15;) if the universal society of the disciples of Jesus is "the light of the world—a city set on a hill," which "cannot be hid;" (Matt. v. 14;) if divine truth is, through this appointed means, outwardly maintained and promulgated in the world—such a result is to be primarily attributed to the operation of the Holy Spirit. And to the same divine Agent is to be primarily attributed also, the existence of that sacred volume of the Bible —that free and invaluable gift of God to man—which contains (as I have already endeavoured to demonstrate) a *divinely authorized* record, of all the doctrines which we are required to believe, and of all the duties which we are bound to practise: *see Essay* V.

It is not, however, the possession of information respecting the truths of religion, nor the conviction of the natural understanding of their reality, that will be sufficient, in themselves, to save the soul from death, or to prepare it for the unsullied happiness of the heavenly mansions. *Saving* knowledge is not a mere intellectual acquirement; it is a *spiritual apprehension* of divine things. Whatever may be our measure of mental cultivation on the subject of religion, we are destitute of this saving knowledge until we form something like a *just estimate* of the Supreme Being, as an object, at once, of reverential fear, and of filial love and confidence—until we behold things temporal, and things eternal, in their true relative proportions—until we entertain an adequate view of the deformity of vice, and of the beauty and excellence of virtue—until, above all, we have been impressed with a lively sense of the boundless mercies of God in Christ Jesus, and, with the eye of faith, have beheld the unspeakable grace and beauty of the Beloved of Souls.

Now, in order to the attainment of this just view—this essential, practical, knowledge—of divine things, it is indispensably necessary that the perverted *moral optics* of fallen man, should be changed and rectified; and this work can be effected only by the Holy Spirit, who not only causes the truths of Christianity to be outwardly revealed to us, but bestows upon us that sound and experimental sense of them, which is alone effectual for our regeneration and salvation. It was the prayer of the apostle Paul for his Ephesians brethren, that God would give unto them "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation," in the knowledge of Christ; "*the eyes of their understanding being enlightened,*" that they might know "what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power:" Eph. i. 17—19. And that all such saving knowledge of the truth is foreign from our own nature, and is wrought in man by the Holy Spirit, the same apostle has expressly determined in the following comprehensive passage: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the *Spirit of God:* for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually* discerned: but he that is spiritual (i. e. he that is influenced by the Spirit) *discerneth*[1] *all things*, yet he himself is discerned of no man:" 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15.

With that divine illumination of the understanding to which we have now adverted, respecting God and Christ, sin and holiness, life, death, and eternity, is closely—perhaps inseparably—connected—*a corresponding change of the heart or affections.* Those who have attained to a spiritual apprehension of the power, the sovereignty, the wisdom, and all the moral perfections, of the Supreme Being, can scarcely fail to fear, honour, love, and desire him above all things. Those who have been enabled, by divine grace, to

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 15. ἀνακρίνει—"discerneth." I have here adopted the common English *marginal* version, which is evidently correct: *compare* v. 14: *vide Schleusner lex. in voc.*

embrace any adequate view of the comparative nothingness of things temporal, and of the unsearchable depth and importance of eternity, will not long continue destitute of a powerful impulse to deliver themselves from the bondage of the world, and to lay firm hold of ever-enduring happiness. Those who are quickened of God to a due sense of the deep depravity of sin, and of the unblemished loveliness of virtue, will assuredly be anxious to escape from the corruptions of their fallen nature, and to live in conformity with the divine law, which is holy, and just, and true. Those, lastly, who know that God is their reconciled Father through Christ, and that Jesus has bought them with the precious price of his own blood, are furnished with almost irresistible motives to devote themselves to the service, and to follow the footsteps, of their Holy Redeemer. Now, this change of mind and affection, as well as of sentiment, is the work, not of the natural man, nor of any of his faculties, but solely of the Lord's Spirit: for persons in whom such a change has taken place are *spiritually minded*, and they only are spiritually minded who have submitted themselves to the influence, and are, therefore, following the dictates, of the Converter and Sanctifier of men. "To be carnally minded," said the apostle Paul to the Romans, "is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the SPIRIT OF GOD DWELL IN YOU. Now, if any man have not the SPIRIT OF CHRIST, he is none of his:" Rom. viii. 6—9.

Now, I conceive, that all those persons, of every denomination and condition, who have experienced such a change, of *view* on the one hand, and of *disposition* on the other, are properly described as the *regenerate* children of God. They are introduced to a new world, and are animated by new principles of action. A "new heart" is given to them, and a "new spirit" is put within them. They are born a

second time, born from above, born of the eternal Spirit of the Father of light and holiness. "As many as received him," says the apostle John respecting Jesus Christ, "to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were *born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God*:" John i. 12, 13.

Under that free operation of the Spirit, which is as the wind blowing where it listeth, examples may probably sometimes occur of the very rapid and even sudden production of that revolution in the sentiments and affections of fallen man, which has now been depicted, and of which the *beginning* only can be properly described as a *new birth*. Such an example is afforded by the history of the apostle Paul, who, within the compass of one short journey, was first a persecutor of the Christians, and afterwards a preacher of Christianity;—who left Jerusalem, the proud, furious, sanguinary bigot,—and entered Damascus the subdued and contrite believer, prepared to be an instrument of honour in his master's hands, for the most extensive propagation of the Gospel, which any individual has ever been the means of effecting. But, in general, this vital change is very gradual, and its precise commencement, as well as the daily progress of its growth, are often impalpable alike to the regenerate man himself and to the persons by whom he is surrounded. "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, *he knoweth not how*. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear:" Mark iv. 26—28. All that we can, for the most part, safely say on the subject is this—that, as the vital principle of religion—the immortal seed of the kingdoms—springs up and unfolds itself in the heart of the believer, *the celestial plant is known by its fruits*.

During the progress of the work of religion—a work, in general, slow and gradual—of which the

commencement is regeneration, and the end salvation, it cannot be denied, that the individual who has been really quickened by the Spirit, and is therefore *born* again, is nevertheless exposed to many seasons of doubt and darkness, and wages a painful, and sometimes unequal warfare, with the infirmity and corruptions of the flesh, with the temptations of the world, and with the power of the enemy. Such a warfare is described, in affecting terms, by the apostle Paul:—"We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.....I *delight* in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The answer to this question was, "I thank God," or according to another reading of the Greek Text, "the *grace* of God [2] through Jesus Christ our Lord;" and this answer introduces the full enunciation of that glorious doctrine already adverted to, that *the law of the Spirit of life* in Christ Jesus "*makes free* from the law of sin and death"—that, "what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled (or completed) [3] in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:" Rom. vii. 14—25; viii. 2—4.

Although, therefore, the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, which strive within us, and are contrary the one to the other, is often long-continued, and perhaps is seldom entirely finished, until the moment when the thread of the Christian's life is cut, and death is swallowed up in victory, we ought, nevertheless, to be consoled and encouraged under the

[2] ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ, instead of Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ Θεῷ. *Vide Gr. Test. Griesbach*; Rom. vii. 25.

[3] Rom. viii. 4. πληρωθῇ. *Vide Schleusner lex. in voc.* 5 *and* 6.

assurance that divine grace is *omnipotent*, and to press forward with holy diligence and magnanimity towards the only practical standard proposed to us by the Gospel—the standard of *uninterrupted* piety, charity, and holiness.

This remark will form a natural introduction to the doctrine of Scripture, that the Holy Spirit not only regenerates fallen man, by effecting in him the first change from darkness to light, and from moral death to a spiritual life, but, during the whole progress of the work of religion in our souls, is our teacher, our helper and comforter, and above all, our sanctifier: and that, in these respects, *his* operations are perfectly adapted to *our* condition.

To dwell, for a short time, on the several particulars of the subject, let us observe in the first place, that the spiritual knowledge of the Christian is *progressive*. Although, from the very period of his regeneration, he may, on the comparison with his former condition, be safely called the "child of the day," (1 Thess. v. 5) he is by no means brought at once into its meridian brightness. On the contrary, after the first day-spring from on high has dawned upon him, the clouds of doubt and darkness are very frequently found to intervene, and, at these times, the Sun of Righteousness is no longer perceptible to his mental vision. When such is his condition, he can exclaim with the prophet, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour;" (Isa. xlv. 15;) or with Job, "Behold I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: but he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold:" xxiii. 8—10. There can indeed be no question that such periods of doubt and darkness, as of every other conflict and affliction, are appointed or permitted by divine wisdom, that "the trial" of our "faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth" ..... may "be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ:" 1 Peter

i. 7. In the mean time, under an experimental sense of our own ignorance, we are encouraged to look to the Holy Spirit as our teacher and leader, who will never fail to guide us into self-denial, virtue, and peace. It is by him that the law of God is "put" in our "inward parts," and written on our "hearts:" Jer. xxxi. 33. "Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to *instruct* them," said Nehemiah, in his thanksgiving and prayer in behalf of the Lord's people: ix. 20. "If we live in the Spirit," said the apostle, "let us *also walk in the Spirit:*" Gal. v. 25. "As many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God:" Rom. viii. 14.

But, the Holy Spirit not only instructs us how to walk in the paths of righteousness, but, after having once enlightened us respecting divine truth, he graciously condescends, as we continue in the faith grounded and settled, to deepen and enlarge our apprehension of divine things—to illuminate our spiritual understanding more and more with that true knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, which is "life eternal:" for "*the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God:*" 1 Cor. ii. 10. "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name," said the Lord Jesus to his disciples, "he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you:" John xiv. 26. "Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will *guide you into all truth:*" xvi. 13. Now, although these predictions were preeminently applicable to the persons whom our Lord was actually addressing, we are to remember that they, at that early period, constituted the *visible church of Christ on earth;* and we have surely the strongest reasons for believing, that every true member of that church, in every period of its annals, has (as far as relates to all that affects his salvation) *his own part in the promise.* It was to the *catholic church* of his day, that the apostle John afterwards addressed the following declaration: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things—The anointing which ye have received of

him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as, the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him:" 1 John ii. 20, 27.

The Holy Ghost, who thus instructs and illuminates his people, graciously condescends also to strengthen, support, and comfort, them. There is no awakened and regenerate Christian who will refuse to set his seal to the doctrine of Jesus, that, although the "spirit is willing, the *flesh is weak*:" Matt. xxvi. 41. Numerous indeed are our infirmities, and utterly unable are we, by any strength of our own, to maintain the inevitable combat, not only "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places:" Eph. v. 12. But the child of God, in the midst of weakness or distress, is taught to lift up the prayer of the Psalmist: "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me: restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and *uphold me with thy free Spirit*:" Psalm li. *It is the Spirit of God* by whom (as we learn from the apostle Paul) we are to be "strengthened with might in the inner man;" (Eph. iii. 16;) and as the spiritual desire advances, the spiritual *strength* increases. "Blessed is the man," cried the Psalmist, "whose strength is in thee.... *they go from strength to strength;* every one of them in Zion appeareth before God!" Psalm lxxxiv. 5—7.

The Holy Spirit is our helper also in another point of view. He prays in us and for us—he bestows life, depth, and efficacy, on our petitions to the throne of grace—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God;" Rom. viii. 26, 27.

During one of the last conversations which the Saviour of mankind held with his disciples, he said to them—"If ye love me, keep my commandments: and

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another COMFORTER, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you:" John xiv. 15—17. The title under which Jesus Christ has here and elsewhere described the Holy Spirit, is of a very comprehensive character. It is one of those Greek terms which the Jews, at that period, had adopted into their own language, and it denotes not merely one who consoles, but one who patronizes and advocates—one who protects, defends, and instructs—one who speaks and acts on behalf of another.[4] From the observations already made, it is easy to perceive that the Holy Spirit is truly, in *all* these respects, the helper, and therefore the comforter, of the disciples of Christ. More especially, however, he is their comforter, because he bestows upon them a blessed assurance that God dwells in them, and that they are the children of God, and the heirs of immortality—an assurance which amply compensates for all the griefs and trials incident to our present state of being. "Hereby we know that (God) abideth in us," says the apostle John, "by the Spirit which he hath given us" — "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit:" 1 John iii. 24; iv. 13. So also the apostle Paul declares that "our hope *maketh not ashamed*," (or in other words, is such a hope as we know cannot be disappointed) "*because* the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us:" Rom. v. 5. Again, he says, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;* if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together:" viii. 15—17. Thus it is

[4] *Vide Schleusner, lex. in voc.* παράκλητος; *Buxtorf. lex. Chald. in voc.* פרקליטא; *and Rosenmuller Schol. in loc.*

that the Spirit bestowed upon the Christian, during his present mortal career, is the "*earnest*" or "*pledge*" of his future blissful inheritance: 2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5. Thus it is that we are "*sealed*" by the Spirit, "unto the day of redemption:" Eph. i. 13; iv. 30. We ought, however, to remember, that in comforting the believer, and in assuring him of his future bliss, as well as in illuminating and strengthening him, the Spirit operates progressively. As the Christian's knowledge and love are enlarged, and his faith deepened, he receives a *gradually increasing* ability to repose with confidence on the merits of his Redeemer, and to rejoice with holy serenity, in the expectation of eternal glory.

Although, lastly, we cannot be too grateful to the Author of all our mercies for the protecting, sustaining, and gladdening, influence of the Comforter, it requires peculiar watchfulness that we do not attempt to lay claim to the *consolations* of religion, while we continue in our sins. It is an unalterable truth, that without holiness none shall see God: and in considering the operations of the Holy Spirit, it is above all things to be remembered, that, notwithstanding the weakness of the flesh and the power of temptation, he is our all-powerful, all-sufficient, *Sanctifier*. The Scriptures afford us every encouragement to believe that those who walk in the light, and dwell under the influence of the Spirit, and who submit with patience to the work of that Holy One of Israel, who is so justly compared by the prophet to the "refiner's fire" and the "fuller's soap," (Mal. iii. 2) are gradually delivered from the power of iniquity. By the "washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," they are actually "saved" from sin. The promise of Jehovah to his people is of a clear and decided character—"I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from *all* your filthiness and from *all* your idols I will cleanse you . . . . . I will also *save you from all your uncleannesses*:" Ezek. xxxvi. 25—29. "Be not deceived," said the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, "neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves

with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are WASHED, but ye are SANCTIFIED, but ye are JUSTIFIED, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God:" 1 Cor. vi. 9—11.

Now, when the work of the Spirit of God has thus progressed and prevailed in the soul of man, the needful change from darkness to light, from sin to holiness, and from the world to God, becomes confirmed and established. The fruit of the Spirit is conspicuously produced; and this fruit has always the same character—that of "all goodness and righteousness and truth:" Eph. v. 9. "The fruit of the Spirit," says Paul to the Galatians, "is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law:" v. 22, 23. And to the Romans he says, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life:" vi. 22. When, notwithstanding the many infirmities and corruptions of our nature, such fruit comes to be produced in its true beauty and ripeness, *the grace of God is triumphant.* The "old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" is *put off:* the "new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," is *put on;* (Eph. iv. 22—24;) and in the experience of the tried and persevering Christian is accomplished the apostolic saying, that "If any man be in Christ, he is *a new creature:* old things are passed away; BEHOLD ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW!" 2 Cor. v. 17.

Such are the operations of the Holy Spirit in the true Christian—operations which afford irresistible evidences of the pure benevolence, the perfect wisdom, and the absolute omnipotence, of that celestial Agent by whom they are conducted. We ought, however, to observe, that, although every individual Christian has his own part in the promise of the Spirit, that promise, nevertheless, is, in the language of Scripture, almost uniformly directed to the *church at large.* It is not merely the single believer, in his individual

capacity—it is the united company of those who fear God and trust in Jesus—who are illuminated and instructed, strengthened and comforted, washed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost. And it is only as the church of Christ on earth is subjected to the restoring and purifying influence of the Spirit of God, that she can ever maintain her true character of charity, and peace, and holiness; or realize the descriptions which are given of her in the poetry of inspiration:—"the king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold"—"fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners:" Psalm xlv. 13; Cant. vi. 10.

Christianity is a social religion: its virtues are of a character at once binding and diffusive: and, amidst all the fruits of the Spirit, there is none so delightful, and none so distinguishing, as that holy love, of which God in Christ is the first object, and all mankind the next; and which more especially unites in the bands of the fellowship of the Gospel, those persons, of whatsoever name or profession, who believe in the Lord Jesus, and are "baptized *by one Spirit into one body.*" Theirs is the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"—"the communion of the Holy Ghost." And this communion extends itself from the church militant to the church triumphant. It already brings heaven and earth together; and its full perfection will be known in that glorious day, when the number of God's elect shall be completed; (Matt. xxiv. 31;)—when all distinctions of peculiar opinion shall be for ever lost amongst them—and when the universal society of saints and angels shall unite in rendering unto the Lord God and the Lamb, the same eternal tribute of obedience, thanksgiving, and praise.

In reverting to the principal particulars of the subject which we have now been considering, the reader will call to mind the following plain positions.

That since, while he continues in the moral darkness and sinful pollutions of his fallen nature, man is utterly unfit for the presence of God, and for the inheritance of the saints in light, it follows, that, in order to enjoy that presence, and obtain that inheritance,

he must not only be delivered from guilt through the atoning blood of Christ, but must be born again—must be restored to spiritual light and life—to truth, love, piety, and holiness.

That this indispensable change, in the condition and character of man, is effected by an invisible, intangible, yet real and powerful influence, which is as the wind blowing where it listeth, and which constitutes no part of our natural endowments—that, on the contrary, it is entirely supernatural—the influence of the Spirit of GOD, and the especial promise of the Father.

That Christ crucified is the channel through which alone this restorative influence flows to man; that, by his meritorious sacrifice, the Son of God has purchased for us the celestial boon, which he now freely bestows upon his people for their instruction, consolation, and sanctification.

That the Holy Ghost, considered in his divine and personal character, is described in Scripture as performing a most essential part in the furtherance and execution of the great scheme appointed for man's redemption; for, in the first place, it was through him that the Son of God became incarnate: was anointed, and immeasurably gifted for his work; and finally, offered up himself a sacrifice for the sins of mankind: secondly, it is he who operates in the *seed of the Messiah*—the universal church of Christ—for their illumination and salvation.

In considering, at large, the latter branch of the subject, we have found occasion to remark, that to the Holy Spirit is to be primarily attributed all that external knowledge of divine truth which is imparted to man by revelation; that he is the immediate author of those various gifts, by means of which the visible church was established, and is still maintained; and more especially that he inspired the writers of the Holy Scripture.

That he applies revealed truth to the understanding, and bestows that just estimate and *sense* of it, which constitutes a spiritual and saving knowledge of religion; and that, by this means, he changes the course

of our motives and affections, and effects our conversion and regeneration.

That the new birth, i. e. the commencement of the new life, is often imperceptible to ourselves, and is usually followed by many seasons of darkness and doubt—of painful and difficult conflict with the corruption of the flesh, and with the power of Satan; but that, during the progress of the work which terminates in the salvation of the faithful and obedient Christian, the Holy Spirit is ever found to be his teacher, his guide, his helper, his comforter, his pledge of future happpiness, and above all, his omnipotent SANCTIFIER.

That thus the fruit of the Spirit is produced in all holiness, righteousness, and truth; and man, both in principle and in practice, becomes *a new creature.*

Lastly, that the Holy Spirit illuminates, refines, and cleanses, not only the individual believer as such, but the universal society of true Christians; and more especially, that he "sheds abroad" in their hearts the love of God, and introduces them to that peaceful communion of saints, which is commenced on earth, and consummated in heaven.

To conclude—since all true holiness in man is derived from the Spirit of Truth—since, when *he* forsakes us, we are left destitute of the very spring of virtue and piety—it surely becomes us not only to give that scriptural doctrine which has now been considered, a place in our creed, but earnestly to embrace it, and with full purpose of heart to avail ourselves of the promise of the Father, for our own personal edification and growth in grace.

Now, in order to this end, the mind of the Christian ought ever to be habituated to the *attitude of expectation.* "My soul, wait thou only upon God," said David, "for my *expectation* is from him:" Psalm lxii. 5. We cannot too much cultivate that just and wholesome sense of our own natural depravity, and of the boundless grace of the Supreme Being, towards his believing and dependent children, which will induce us, from day to day, and from hour to hour, (in whatsoever calling we may be engaged)

to *wait* upon him; to fix upon him our warm and constant regards; and to *expect* his divine assistance; for it is thus that we shall be best prepared to receive those constant supplies of a celestial influence, which can alone purify our motives, chasten and sanctify our thoughts, and enable us to persevere with simplicity and sincerity in the path of Christian duty. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint:" Isa. xl. 31.

But the Christian, who is acquainted with the corruption of his own heart, and knows the unutterable value of a divine influence, will not only strive to attain to this *waiting* frame of mind—this habitual attitude of pious expectation—but will also often plead the promise of the Father in *actual prayer*. As the duty of prayer, in general, is largely enforced upon us in Scripture, so are we encouraged, in a very especial manner, and that by the Lord Jesus himself, to pray for *the Holy Spirit*. "If a son," said he to his disciples, "shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? if ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; *how much more* shall your heavenly Father *give the Holy Spirit* to them that ask him?" Luke xi. 11—13. And here I would remark, that, as the gift of the Holy Spirit is a pure, unmixed, unquestionable, good—since it must always tend, without the slightest variation or "shadow of turning," to our own essential happiness, and to the glory of God—it is a blessing for which we cannot pray too constantly or too fervently. In order to the attainment of such a blessing, we may safely give wings to our utmost desires, and without reserve, pour forth our warmest petitions to a throne of grace. The influence of the Holy Spirit is precisely that one indispensable gift, for which "men ought *always* to pray and not to faint:" Luke xviii. 1.

Finally, we are exhorted by an apostle not to *quench*,

and not to *grieve*, the Holy Spirit: Eph. iv. 30: 1 Thess. v. 19. Experience affords us many a melancholy proof, that merciful as are the designs of the eternal Spirit towards us, and infinite as is his power, he may soon be *grieved* by our pride, our impenitence, our unbelief, and our rebellion, and his gentle influences *quenched* by the vain pleasures of the world, and the sinful indulgence of the flesh. It is said of the Israelites of old, (and very awful is the warning) that "they rebelled and vexed (the Lord's) Holy Spirit, and that, "*therefore*," God "was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them:" Isa. lxiii. 10. If we would avail ourselves of the privileges of the Gospel dispensation, and participate in the fellowship of the saints, and in the peace of God, we must not only *wait* and *pray* for the Holy Spirit — we must also yield to his influence, submit ourselves to his guidance, and obey his dictates. Thus, and thus only, shall we make an effectual progress in our Christian course, advance in the life of grace and holiness, and realize, in our own experience, the declaration of Solomon, that "*the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day:*" Prov. iv. 18.

Having now considered the principal features of that glorious plan of love and wisdom which God has appointed for the redemption of mankind, we may revert to the inquiry which formed our Introduction to the present Essay. What could be the mighty and equivalent purposes for which that infinitely glorious Person, the Son of God, who is one with the Father in the divine nature, and is therefore himself JEHOVAH, should so marvellously condescend and humble himself, as to take our nature upon him; in that nature undergo every species of contumely and contradiction of sinners, and finally die on the cross a cruel and shameful death?

To this inquiry, the scriptural statements, which have now passed under our review, afford a full and

satisfactory answer. In his adorable mercy, in his almighty power, he came not only to reveal the truth, and to promulgate the law of God, but also to deliver mankind; to recover them from their lost condition; to save them from the dominion of Satan, and from everlasting destruction; to supply all their spiritual need; to reconcile them by his blood-shedding and mediation to the Father Almighty; to impart to them the merits of his own righteousness; to illuminate, regenerate, and sanctify them by his Holy Spirit; to bestow upon them both indemnity and cure; and thus to provide for them a boundless eternity of unsullied happiness. Here are unfolded purposes worthy of the Son of God, by whom all things were created "in heaven and in earth;" and worthy of the peculiar display of his love and condescension revealed to us in the Bible—purposes fully adequate to his divine dignity, and capable of being carried into effect only by HIM, who, while he suffered in our suffering nature, was indeed JEHOVAH—personally participating in the wisdom, power, and essence, of the ONLY TRUE GOD. Whether, indeed, we regard the human nature of Jesus Christ, in which he ministered to our necessities, died for our sins, rose for our justification, and now, in his priestly character, is tenderly touched with a feeling of our infirmities—or his divine nature, which imparts an infinite efficacy to all his gracious offices—we cannot but acknowledge, that between the spiritual wants of mankind on the one hand, and the sure mercies of the Messiah of God on the other, there subsists a nice, an accurate, a perfect, adaptation.

When we reflect on that adaptation—when we dwell at once on its comprehensiveness and its exactness, our minds become furnished with an experimental and conclusive proof—a proof which the cavils of infidelity can never weaken—that the message of the Gospel of Christ is no "cunningly-devised fable," but *irrefragable truth;* and we are prepared to *apprehend* the declaration of the apostle—"He that hath THE SON, hath life; and he that hath not the SON OF GOD, hath not life:" 1 John v. 12. While, however, we accept the eternal Son of God, as the Saviour and

Redeemer of men, our Resurrection and our Life, our *only* hope of Glory, we are always to remember, that herein are our strength and joy—that "through HIM" we have "access by ONE SPIRIT, unto the FATHER:" Eph. ii. 18. Nothing, indeed, is so much calculated to fill the mind of the believer with wonder, admiration, and gratitude, as the *joint and united love*—the perfect harmony of design and operation—with which the FATHER decrees, the SON conducts, and the SPIRIT assists and completes, the mighty scheme of man's redemption. In contemplating so vast and awful a subject, we can surely do no less than bow down in abasement of soul before the Majesty of heaven, and exclaim, Glory be to God on high—glory be to the FAFHER, and to the SON, and to the HOLY GHOST, now and for ever!

ESSAY XII.

ON FAITH AND OBEDIENCE.

To inform and cultivate our understandings respecting the fundamental truths of the Christian religion, is obviously a very important duty; for ignorance on these subjects is the fruitful parent of error and corruption, and unless our acquaintance with Christianity comprehends a correct view of its principal features, we shall never form a right estimate of its incomparable value. It cannot however be too strongly enforced, or too constantly remembered, that all true religion is directed to practical ends. Having, therefore, in the preceding Essays, been engaged in contemplating what may be termed the *theory* of the scheme of the Gospel, we may now proceed to consider those principles of disposition and action *in ourselves*, by means of which Christianity is carried forward to its legitimate results, the happiness of man, and the glory of God. The principles to which I allude are *faith* and *obedience*.

PART I.

ON FAITH.

Extraordinary as is the religion of the Bible, in a number of important particulars, there is scarcely any circumstance by which it is more clearly distinguished from the corrupt theology, and the inferior moral

philosophy, of even the wisest of the heathen, than by its doctrine of *faith*. The sacred writers have been at very great pains to impress on an unregenerate world, lying in wickedness, a *practical* lesson, of which, I believe, we shall find but very faint and uncertain traces, in the writings of Plato, of Aristotle, or of Cicero—namely, that *belief* or *faith*, considered as *a motive or principle of action*, is of indispensable importance to our virtue and peace in this world, and to our eternal happiness in the world to come.

Such a doctrine, although well adapted to our actual condition, is in fact opposed to the pride of the heart of man, and therefore to the dictates of merely human wisdom. Since, indeed, there is an obvious association between faith and credulity, or, in other words, between believing and believing too much or too easily, and since credulity is a constant ingredient of enthusiasm, it is no matter of surprise that persons who have never thought, except in a very superficial manner, on the subject of religion, should attribute to the serious believer in Christianity the character of fanaticism, and should conclude that those who are endeavouring "to walk by *faith*" are in fact committing themselves to the guidance of their own *fancy*.

A very little reflection, however, on the analogy subsisting, in this respect, between the known system of nature and providence, and the revealed provisions of the Gospel, will presently convince us of the unreasonableness of such a conclusion, and will, I trust, prepare the reader for an impartial and deliberate view of the scriptural account of *faith*, as of a principle absolutely essential to the present and eternal well-being of the soul of man.

Faith or belief is declared by the apostle to be the substance of things *hoped for*, the evidence of things *not seen*; (Heb. xi. 1;[5]) and in its most general sense may, perhaps, be correctly defined as a reliance of the mind on the truth of that which is probable, but *not known*. Nothing is *known* (to speak with entire

[5] ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων.

precision) but that which is self-evident, or absolutely demonstrated. Since, therefore, among the innumerable propositions, which, in the natural course of our life, are practically presented to our regard and attention, there is but a very small proportion indeed, to which such a description can be applied; it is easy to perceive, that, to *walk by faith*, in a plain though subordinate sense of these terms, is the universal and inevitable lot of humanity. Were I the most solitary of hermits, or cast, like the shipwrecked mariner, on an uninhabited island, I could not live at all, did I not, in a multitude of instances, exercise the principle of faith. I must be led about by probabilities. Although both my senses and my experience might possibly deceive me, I must, for life's sake, rely on their evidence, and act in pursuance of their dictates.

But it is in social and civil life, more particularly, that the principle of faith is called into action, and every one, who has reflected on the subject, must be well aware, that were it not for the willing admission of those things which are not philosophically certain, but only in various degrees probable, and more especially for a due reliance on *testimony*, the whole framework of society would be disorganized and subverted. Faith is an indispensable link in that mighty chain of divine wisdom and providence, which binds together man to man, family to family, and nation to nation: and, without it, there could be no order or union in the intellectual part of God's visible creation. Such being the state of the case, there can be nothing opposed to true reason and philosophy in the perfectly corresponding fact, that, under the moral and spiritual government of God, and in order to that religious life which is alone productive of eternal happiness, men are required to bring *the same principle* into action, and to regulate their dispositions and conduct not merely by their knowledge of that which is certain, but more especially, and more *extensively* by their belief of that which is probable.

Although, however, the subjects of our belief, both in things temporal and in things spiritual, are with more philosophical precision described as probabilities

than as certainties, and although this almost universal necessity for our acting on that which is probable, rather than on that which is certain, affords one among many humbling proofs of the narrow limits of our intellectual powers, it ought by no means to be forgotten that, for all practical purposes, *knowledge* and *belief* are often found to be nearly tantamount. Both one and the other are grounded on evidence, and where evidence, though short of mathematical demonstration, is nevertheless *conclusive*, belief assumes the character of that strong yet easy and familiar persuasion of the mind, which is frequently and not unreasonably described as *knowledge*. Well might the apostle Peter say to his Christian friends, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the KNOWLEDGE of God, and of Jesus our Lord:" 2 Pet. i. 2. Well might the afflicted Job exclaim, "I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth!" xix. 25: *comp.* Heb. x. 26, &c.

In social and civil life, while the *subjects* of our faith are almost infinitely various, the *objects* to whom it is directed are usually our fellow-men, whose testimony we are in the constant habit of receiving as true. In the religious life, the subjects of faith are also both numerous and diversified; but the final *object* of it is one and unchangeable: it is *God alone*. The faith by which the just man lives, and which the Scriptures represent as necessary to our peace and salvation, is faith in God, the Creator and supreme Governor of the universe. "Without faith," says the inspired writer already quoted, "it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him:" Heb. xi. 6.

It is well worthy of remark, that the gracious Being who has endowed mankind with the noble faculty of reason, is ever found to deal with us as with *reasonable* creatures; and proposes nothing to our belief, of the truth of which he does not, at the same time, afford us a sufficient and satisfactory evidence. It is almost needless to remark, that this observation is eminently and irresistibly applicable to that funda-

mental proposition of all true religion—that God exists. That every effect has its cause is self-evident. Since, then, the visible world is full of effects—since those effects must be all traced to causes—since the causes to which they are traced are themselves also effects, and must be attributed to an anterior train of causes, and so on—it necessarily follows, that there must have been a first cause of the whole, uncreated, and from eternity. That this first cause is *intelligent*, we learn from the innumerable evidences of design, with which all creation is filled. And, further, we conclude, from the perfect harmony of that design, that he is *one;* from the infinite skill and power displayed in its execution, that he is *all-wise and omnipotent;* from the actual happiness so abundantly bestowed on his creatures, that he is *good;* and, lastly, from the evident *tendency* of his providence, even here, that he is a moral governor—one who rewards the righteous, and punishes the wicked.

Now, as we cannot please our neighbour, or avail ourselves of his kind dispositions and intentions towards us, except we trust in him, so it is impossible that we should be acceptable to God, or enjoy his favour and protection, unless we exercise towards him that religious faith, of which he is the only proper object—unless we place on him the reliance of our soul, as on an infinite, all-wise, all-powerful, and merciful Being, who is able and willing to supply our spiritual need, to strengthen us to walk in the way of righteousness, and to bestow upon us the blessing of a happy immortality.

When we reflect on the various attributes of that perfect and infinite Being who created all things, visible and invisible, and who exercises an absolute dominion over the works of his own hands, and recollect our own condition of helplessness and dependence, we cannot fail to perceive how just and reasonable are the principles on which such a reliance is required of us. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength," is the voice of sound sense, of enlightened reason, and of true philosophy. Above all, however, it is the voice of inspiration, and

therefore the voice of God himself. When the Lord Jesus was conversing with his disciples, and displaying to them his miraculous powers, he enjoined them to "*have faith in God;*" (Mark xi. 22;) and this fundamental precept of the practical code of Christianity was in perfect correspondence with the principle recognized through all preceding ages of the world, among the Lord's children—namely, that "*the just shall live by faith;*" Hab. ii. 4. Never, indeed, were the psalmists and prophets of ancient Israel more eloquent, than when they proclaimed the duty of ceasing from man "whose breath is in his nostrils," and of trusting with the whole heart in the God of mercy, wisdom, and truth. "As for God, his way his perfect," said David in his song of public thanksgiving: "the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all them that *trust in him;* for who is God, save the Lord? and who is a rock, save our God?" 2 Sam. xxii. 31, 32. Again he says, "The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants, and *none of them that trust in him shall be desolate*"—"They that *trust* in the Lord shall be as mount Zion: which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever:" Psalm xxxiv. 22; cxxv. 1. And the prophet Jeremiah, after describing the cursed estate of him who "trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm," thus depicts the peace and prosperity of the faithful believer in the only true God: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit:" Jeremiah xvii. 7. 8: *compare* Job xiii. 15: Psalm xl. 4: Prov. xxix. 25: 1 Tim. iv. 10, &c.

From these and a variety of similar passages, it is abundantly evident, that the childlike affiance of the soul of man in its almighty and merciful Creator is well-pleasing to God; and is the appointed means of drawing down on the frail, dependent, unworthy, creature, the blessings of forgiveness, grace, and sal-

vation. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and independently of the deeds of the law, faith is *justifying* in the sight of God.

This doctrine is declared, in terms at once very general and very explicit, by the apostle Paul: "Therefore," says that inspired writer, "we conclude that a man is justified by faith *without the deeds of the law*. Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.....What shall we then say that Abraham, our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham *believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*. Now, to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but *believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly, his *faith is counted for righteousness*:" Rom. iii. 28—30; iv. 1—5.

When we calmly reflect on the evidences afforded to all mankind of the existence and moral government of God, and when we consider that the reception of these evidences in the mind is anterior to that of revelation, it is imposible for us not to allow that, without the aid of the knowledge of revealed truth, man is capable of faith in the Supreme Being. And wherever, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, this faith "worketh by love"—wherever it includes the reliance of the heart as well as the conviction of the understanding—wherever it is productive of the fear of the Lord, and of the fruits of righteousness, —there, undoubtedly, it obtains for man the favour of his Creator, for "God is no respecter of persons, but, in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him:" Acts x. 34, 35: *comp.* Gen. iv. 7.

All the exhortations of Scripture, however on the subject of faith, are especially addressed to that proportion of the family of man, whom God has been pleased to bless with the light of an outward revela-

tion. That light was bestowed upon our first parents —was imparted by successive communications to a chosen line of their descendants—and was at length more generally diffused among mankind through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. Now, I consider it to be a position at once consistent with reason, and agreeable to Scripture, that, among all those persons to whom the truths of revealed religion are made known, *a belief in those truths* forms an essential part, or rather a necessary consequence, of an acceptable faith in God. If the trust of our souls is really placed on an all-wise and omnipotent Being; if we are convinced that he is a God of holiness, justice, and truth; and if, in accordance with such a conviction, we love and revere him as we ought to do, it necessarily follows that we shall believe his word—that we shall heartily accept his law, and steadily rely on his promises. Accordingly, this belief in the word of the Lord—this ready acceptance of his revealed truth —is often represented by the sacred writers as a duty positively required of us by our Heavenly Father, and as an *indispensable* link in that chain which is to terminate in our eternal salvation. "Believe in the Lord your God," said king Jehosaphat to the assembly of his people, "so shall ye be established; *believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper:*" 2 Chron. xx. 20. The "*word preached*" did not profit the Israelites, because it was not "mixed with faith in them that heard it;" and it was in consequence of their unbelief in that word, that they were forbidden to enter into the promised land—their "carcasses fell in the wilderness:" Heb. iii. 17; iv. 1, 2. And so it is with that part of mankind to whom is revealed the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If it is not mixed with faith in those who hear and read it, it cannot possibly profit them; and the fatal consequence is declared to be, that they fall or perish; (Heb. iv. 11;) that they are precluded from the privileges of Christians in this world, and from a blessed entrance into the mansions of rest and glory, in the world to come. "Repent ye, and *believe the Gospel,*" was the cry uttered at the very commencement of his ministry, by the greatest of preachers;

(Mark i. 15;) and nothing surely can be more explicit —nothing more awfully instructive—than the declaration with which the ministry of Jesus was concluded; "Go ye," said he to his disciples, "into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned:*" Mark xvi. 15, 16.

In the evidences which God has graciously afforded us of his own existence, omnipotence, goodness, and moral government, he has manifested to the reason of every unbiassed mind, a satisfactory ground for his commandment, *that in him we should put our trust.* I have already remarked that, in this respect, he has dealt with us as with reasonable creatures. Now, a similar observation applies with equal precision to the present point of our subject. He who has, in infinite wisdom, ordained, that our happiness should depend on the belief of his word, has mercifully provided us with ample evidences, that it *is* his word. The three great signs, by means of which, he has been pleased to impress the stamp of authenticity on his own extraordinary communications with mankind, are, *first*, miracles; *secondly*, prophecy connected with its fulfilment; and, *thirdly*, the moral efficacy of that which is revealed; and the last of these signs may be regarded as the sure confirmation—as the unquestionable guarantee of the two former.

There are many passages of Scripture, in which miracles are adverted to, as a safe and sufficient ground for a belief in the word of the Lord—as an appointed sign of the divine origin of professed revelation.—Thus, we read, that when Moses was sent with a divine commission to the children of Israel in their Egyptian bondage, he was commanded and enabled of the Lord to work two signal miracles, that so his brethren might *believe*, that the Lord God of their fathers had appeared to him; (Exod. iv. 1—5;) and that which is afterwards described as exciting the indignation of God, was the obstinacy of the people, who, *notwithstanding the sign of miracles*, refused to believe in his word: "How long will this people

provoke me?" said the Lord to Moses, "and how long will it be ere they believe me, *for all the signs which I have shewed among them?*" Numb. xiv. 11. How forcible, also, was the appeal which our Saviour made, on the same subject, to the unbelieving Jews by whom he was himself surrounded!—"If I do not the works of my Father," said he, "believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him:" John x. 37, 38. So, again, the sign of prophecy is not unusually adduced in Scripture, as a sure evidence of the truth. Our Lord frequently made mention of the things written concerning him by Moses and the prophets, and fulfilled in his own life and character, as of so many testimonies to the reality of his divine mission; and, on one occasion, we find him exercising the prophetic power respecting an event then about to happen, for the express purpose of convincing his disciples that he was indeed the Christ—that the account which he gave of himself was the true one. After prophesying that Judas would betray him, he said, "Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, *ye may believe that I am he:* John xiii. 19: *compare* Isa. xliii. 8—11, &c.

In the third place, the holiness of the law, and the sanctifying, redeeming, efficacy of the doctrines imparted to us by revelation, are frequently insisted on in Scripture, as a reason for our willingly accepting them and *virtually*, therefore, as an evidence that the only true God is indeed their author. The Psalmist, for example, declares that the "law of the Lord is *perfect*, converting the soul"—that "the testimony of the Lord is *sure*, making wise the simple"—that "the judgments of the Lord are *true* and *righteous* altogether;" and *thus* is he brought to the conclusion, that they are "more to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold:" xix. 7—10. And the prophet Isaiah, after asserting his own inspiration, and the divine authority of the messages which he delivered, speaks in the name of the Lord as follows: "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of

Israel; I am the Lord thy God which *teacheth thee to profit*, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy *righteousness as the waves of the sea:*" xlviii. 17, 18. It was the complaint of Jesus against the Jews, that although John the Baptist came unto them in "*the way of righteousness,*" yet they "believed him not:" Matt. xxi. 32. Lastly, the apostle Paul was "not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ"—(that is, I conceive, was bold to assert it as unquestionably true) —because "it is *the power of God unto salvation*"—because it is proved, by experience, to be the efficacious means of delivering mankind from sin in this world, and, therefore, from eternal punishment in the world to come: *compare* Rom. v. 5.

Now, it is of importance to remember, that these appointed signs of the authority of revealed truth are bestowed upon us in the present day, as well as upon those to whom Christianity was originally preached; for, although the miracles of Jesus and his apostles were not wrought in our presence, we are in possession of ample evidences, that the records of those miracles are both genuine and authentic. With respect to the accomplishment of prophecy, this is a sign of the truth of revelation, which is so far from being diminished or weakened, that it is both enlarged and confirmed, by the progress of time; and the internal evidences of Christianity, are, in every age of equal strength, for those who deliberately observe its moral and saving efficacy in others, or who come under its power, and experience its emancipating virtue, for themselves. If, then, we turn away from the truth as it is in Jesus, and refuse to believe the word of the Lord, as it is handed down to us in the Sacred Volume, we are left, like the Jews of old, without excuse, and lose, *by our own fault*, the incomparable benefits so freely offered to us in the Gospel.

Having thus endeavoured to show the reasonableness of our being required, in the first place, to believe in the existence, and to rely on the attributes, of God; and, in the second place, to give credence to those various

truths respecting which he has been pleased to bestow upon us an especial revelation, I shall endeavour (ere I pass on to the ulterior branches of our subject) briefly to define the respective offices of *reason* and *faith*, in matters of religion. Reason demonstrates that God exists: it marks the sure indications of his moral government, of his power, wisdom, goodness, and mercy: it ascertains the divine origin of the professed revelation of his will; and it is rightly employed, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in the sound and well-principled interpretation of that which is revealed. Faith draws near unto that God whom reason has discovered, and relies with humble confidence on his unchangeable attributes; it quietly accepts, as undoubtedly true, whatsoever he reveals to us, although in various respects deeply mysterious, and above the powers of our natural comprehension; it admits, with equal readiness, the laws, the doctrines, and the promises, of Scripture; and working by love applies them all to their genuine practical purposes. Faith and reason in religion, obviously interfere with one another, when we believe in some propositions which have no *foundation* in reason, or when we reason upon others which are the proper subjects *only* of faith; but as long as these noble and useful faculties of the human mind are kept respectively in their right province, and are brought to bear upon religion, each within its own prescribed limitations, so long will they be found to strengthen and adorn one another, and, in an admirable manner, to cooperate in the mighty work of man's salvation.

The *extent* of religious belief required in men must always be proportioned to the *extent* of light communicated to them; for it is plain, that the more largely divine truth is revealed to us, the more numerous are the subjects respecting which it becomes our duty to exercise the principle of faith. But, where the *extent* of religious knowledge and belief is, through the operation of providential circumstances comparatively limited, faith may, nevertheless, be lively and strong, and may fix itself, with an acceptable energy on its

almighty and unchangeable object—Jehovah. It cannot be supposed, that the patriarchs, either before or after the flood, or the judges, kings, and prophets, of the Israelitish church, possessed so comprehensive a knowledge of divine truth as is now enjoyed, under a superior dispensation, by the disciples of Jesus Christ; yet, probably, faith has never been known to operate with greater strength and efficacy even in Christians, than it did in many of those ancient worshippers of the only true God. The description given in the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the practical operation of that blessed principle, by which Abel offered a "better sacrifice" than Cain—by which Enoch walked with God—by which Noah built an ark for the saving of his house—by which Abraham journeyed into a strange land, and offered up his only son upon the altar—by which Moses refused to become the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt—by which the valiant of the Lord's people, in various ages of the Jewish church, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens—is, in the highest degree, animating and instructive, and may, perhaps, be considered as forming one of the most striking passages of the whole volume of inspiration. These ancient servants of God relied, with the full assurance of filial confidence, on their almighty Governor, believed and obeyed his word, and pressed forward, with holy ardour, towards "the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And, although the glories of the dispensation of the Gospel were indicated to them with that obscurity which necessarily attaches to types and prophecies before they are fulfilled, yet did they embrace the precious promise of a Saviour, were persuaded of its truth, and rejoiced in the prospect of its future accomplishment: Heb. ix. 13, 39. "Your father Abraham," said Jesus Christ to the Jews, "rejoiced to see my day: and he *saw it, and was glad:*" John viii. 56.

After reciting the memorable instances of a living faith in God, thus afforded by the history of their

ancestors, the apostle proposes these instances as examples to the *Christian* Hebrews of his own day. "Wherefore," says he, "seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run, with patience, the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith," &c.: xii. 1, 2. Christians are called upon to bring the *same* principle of faith into action, and while it is their duty to exercise it with equal fervency, they must also allow it to operate, *in a wider extent.* Their spiritual vision must embrace a more exact order, and a more comprehensive scope. If we would be the consistent followers of those saints of ancient days, who, through faith and patience, (brought into exercise under a less enlightened dispensation) are now inheriting the promises, it is plain that we must believe the *whole of these truths* which God has imparted to *us* in the Gospel of his Son. The glimmerings of light enjoyed by the prophets of old, who "inquired and searched diligently respecting the salvation to come," have given way to a fuller and clearer day. The sun of righteousness has now arisen above the horizon of the world, with unclouded brightness.

In marking the *extent* of religious belief, which may reasonably be required of every Christian who is possessed of an adequate acquaintance with the Sacred Volume, it is needless for us now to enter at large into many particulars. I may venture, however, briefly to remark, that the immortality of the soul—the resurrection of the dead,—the approach of a day of final and universal retribution,—the eternity of a future state of suffering or rejoicing,—the personality, power, and deceitfulness of the great adversary,—the divinity, miraculous incarnation, meritorious sufferings, atoning death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession, of the Messiah,—the righteousness of Christ imparted as well as imputed—, and the divinity and regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit,—are points of clear scriptural authority, respecting many of which the ancient Israelitish church were by no means *fully* enlightened,

but which may also be considered as clearly included in the more comprehensive belief of the disciple of Jesus.

But, it is not merely the *subjects* of belief which are more extensively developed under the Gospel dispensation. In one respect the same observation applies to its *object*. In the mighty scheme of redemption, brought to light by the Gospel, the Supreme Being, on whom alone is fixed all true religious faith, has been pleased to unfold himself to the view of the believer, in the mysterious union and distinction of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit: and hence it follows, according to the voice of reason and Scripture united, that, of that faith unto which the convert to Christianity is baptized, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, are (as we have already found occasion to remark) the *equal and inseparable objects:* see Matt. xxviii. 19, and *Essay* VII. The enlightened Christian draws near in reverend confidence of soul to the Father, as to the origin and fountain of all his sure mercies—to the Son as to the Mediator through whom those mercies flow—and to the Holy Spirit as to the omnipresent Agent, by whom the mercies of the Father, and the Mediation of the Son, are completed and applied. Thus, in unison with his brethren who have obtained the like precious faith with himself, he participates in "the grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST," and in "the love of GOD," and in "the communion of the HOLY GHOST:" 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

While this threefold distinction is plainly scriptural, and worthy, therefore, of being ever steadily maintained and asserted, it is more especially to our present purpose to observe, that "God was *in Christ* reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them:" 2 Cor. v. 19. It is *in Christ* that the Supreme Being manifests himself to his creatures; it is *in Christ* that he provides for their salvation; it is *in Christ* that he restores to his favour a lost and fallen world; it is *in Christ* that "all the fulness of the godhead *dwelleth bodily*" (Col. ii. 9); and hence it follows, that under the light of the Gospel dispensation, *except a man believe in the Son*, his belief in the Father is nugatory and unavailing. Whatever may be

the empty profession—whatever the false and dangerous assurance of the mere deist, if Christianity is true, (and I am addressing those only who admit its truth,) it is evident that such a one, in rejecting the Son, rejects the Father also, and is, therefore, left in the condition of those who "are strangers from the covenants of promise"—who have "no hope," and are "WITHOUT GOD in the world:" Eph. ii. 12. This consequence, clear and reasonable as it is in itself, is stated in strong terms by an inspired writer: "Who is a liar," says the apostle John, "but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? he is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father:*" 1 John ii. 22, 23: *comp.* iv. 15: John xiv. 7, 9, 10.

In a former Essay I have adverted to that very remarkable feature of the New Testament, that the Lord Jesus Christ is frequently described in it as a *final* object of *saving* faith; and since, in other parts of Scripture, the doctrine is plainly advanced, that our reliance for salvation can rightly be placed *only* upon God, and that all dependence on the creature *in order to this end* is sinful and fraught with danger, I have, from these premises, deduced what I conceive to be a fair and necessary conclusion, that Jesus Christ is not a mere creature, however exalted, but one in the divine nature with the Father, and, therefore, truly God. Without entering into the further consideration of this particular view of the subject (which has now been again alluded to only for the sake of clearness and consistency,) it seems indispensable to the order of the present discussion, that we should once more direct our attention to some of those numerous passages of the New Testament, which prove that the faith by which the believer in Christianity is saved, is directed personally to Jesus Christ as its object—that it is faith in the Son of God, the Saviour and Redeemer of men. When the trembling jailer at Philippi addressed to Paul and Silas his earnest inquiry—"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"—the answer given to him was direct and explicit, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou *shalt* be saved:" Acts xvi. 30, 31.

"But as many as received him," says the apostle John, "to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe on his name:*" John i. 12. "To him give all the prophets witness," says another apostle, "that through his name, whosoever *believeth in him* shall receive remission of sins:" Acts x. 43. These, and similar apostolic declarations, are in precise accordance with the doctrine so often preached by the Lord Jesus himself,—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth in him* should not perish, but have everlasting life:" John iii. 16. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that *believeth in me* hath everlasting life:" vi. 47. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that *believeth in me*, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and *believeth in me* shall never die:" xi. 25, 26.

Thus it appears, that although the saving efficacy of a living faith by no means depends on the extent of the information imparted to the believer, and may even be experienced by persons who are acquainted only with natural religion, yet, with us, to whom the Gospel is revealed, the faith which alone introduces to a participation in the favour of the Almighty—the faith which alone is justifying in the sight of God—is "faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." It is a reliance of the soul, on the incarnate Son, who conducts the great scheme appointed for our salvation—who in every part of that scheme is prominently presented to our attention—who was himself "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." The "*righteousness* of God," is declared by the apostle Paul to be, "*by faith of Jesus Christ*, unto all and upon *all them that believe:*" Rom. iii. 22. And again, when he was rebuking his less faithful brother in the apostleship, he said, "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not *justified* by the works of the law, but by the *faith of Jesus Christ*, even we have *believed in Jesus Christ*, that we might be *justified* by the *faith of Christ*, and not by the works of the law:" Gal. ii. 15, 16: *comp.* Rom. x. 1—4.

Now, as Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, so it is only in the character of sinners that we are, in the nature of things, capable of *justification;* for "to be justified," in the language of Scripture, and particularly in that of the apostle Paul, usually signifies to be absolved—to be delivered by pardon from the penalty due to our past sins. "The free gift is of *many offences* unto *justification:*" Rom. v. 16. "All have *sinned* and come short of the glory of God; being *justified* freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, *through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past:*" iii. 23—25. From these premises it follows, that, in the order of the grace of God, *justification* precedes *sanctification*, and that the faith in Jesus Christ, by which the *ungodly are justified*, has respect, in a very preeminent manner, to the *atonement* which he has made for the sins of the world. It is faith in a crucified Redeemer, or, to adopt the apostle's words, "faith *in his blood;*" and this doctrine corresponds with the declaration of our Lord himself—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, (on the cross,) that whosoever believeth in him, (that is, I conceive, whosoever places his reliance upon him as the atonement for sin) should not perish, but have eternal life:" John iii. 14, 15; *comp.* Rom. v. 1, 9. While, however, the justification of the sinner, through faith in a crucified Redeemer, precedes the work of sanctification, its close and inseparable connexion with that work is evinced by the fact, that, in the economy of God's spiritual government, this very faith is the constituted means, through which we obtain the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the preceding Essay, I have endeavoured to prove from Scripture, that the channel through which the Spirit flows to man is *Christ crucified;* and I am now remarking, that it is *through faith in Christ crucified*, that we, on our parts, are enabled to receive the Spirit, and are brought under his regenerating and sanctifying influence. "Christ," says the apostle Paul, "hath

redeemed us from the curse of the law, *being made a curse for us*, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit *through faith:*" Gal. iii. 13, 14. "If any man thirst," cried Jesus himself, "let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of *living water:*" John vii. 37, 38: *comp.* verse 39. Those only can truly be said to "eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood," whose whole reliance for salvation is placed upon him, *as the sacrifice for sin:* and these are they who receive the "Spirit that quickeneth"—who dwell in Christ and know Christ by his Spirit to dwell in them—who, through the Spirit, are made alive unto God in this world, and therefore, *live* for ever in the world to come: John vi. 53—63.

Lastly, let it ever be remembered, that the faith in Christ, which is thus frequently declared to be the means of our salvation, and which procures for us the sanctifying effusions of that Holy Spirit by whose influence it is itself originated, is not the mere conviction of our understanding, that Jesus was the true Messiah, or that he made an atonement for the sins of the world. Such a conviction, although desirable and needful, is in itself a dead faith. The devils themselves could confess that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God; and we read, that "*they* also believe, and *tremble:*" James ii. 19. Saving faith in Christ is a living and active principle, implanted by a divine hand in the soul, through which, as *penitent sinners*, we draw near to Jesus—accept him as our only Saviour—spiritually feed upon him as upon the bread of life—and cast ourselves, without reserve, on his merits and mercies. This is that faith which "*worketh by love;*" and, while under the influence of that Christian grace, it fixes itself with humble confidence on Jesus as the great sacrifice for sin, it does not stop here, but embraces the Lord of glory, in all his other gracious offices, as our Lawgiver, our Pattern, our intercessor with the Father, our Sympathizing High Priest, our omnipresent Helper, our Shepherd, and our King.

Finally, the believer who has been enabled thus to accept the Gospel and its mighty Author, is led along by a gentle yet powerful hand, to *walk* by faith in the Son of God—to *live* as the devoted servant of the Lord Jesus Christ—to "*follow* the Lamb wither-soever he goeth!"

Let us now briefly review the contents of the present dissertation.

The doctrine of Scripture, that *belief* or *faith*, considered as a principle of action, is indispensable to the religious life and therefore to our eternal well-being, is in perfect analogy with the known course of God's government over the world; for faith has respect to those things which, though probable, are not absolutely known to us, and especially to the truth of testimony; and it is obvious, that in this point of view, all men are under the necessity of walking by faith.

The subjects of *religious* faith are various, but its only true and proper *object* is God.

In requiring of us faith in himself, God deals with us as with reasonable creatures, for he has imparted to us, by the light of nature, ample evidences of his existence, his goodness, and his moral government.

To place a full reliance of the soul on that Being whom our reason has thus discovered, is a *duty* which the plainest principles of the same reason prove to be required of us, and which in the Bible is insisted on, as fundamental and essential.

Although this trust in God may, through grace be exercised by persons who possess no other information on divine subjects, than that which they derive from natural religion, yet the declarations of Scripture respecting faith, have been, in all ages, addressed to that part of mankind, who have enjoyed the light of an outward revelation. With such as these, a belief in revelation (i.e. in the word of the Lord) is an essential part, or necessary consequence, of an acceptable trust in God. Hence, the blessings promised by the Gospel of Christ are offered *only* to believers in that Gospel. And here, also God deals with us as with reasonable creatures; for he does

not require of us faith in revelation, without at the same time, bestowing upon us the signs of miracles and prophecy, together with internal moral evidences, in order to convince us that he is himself its Author.

Faith, when by no means extensive *as to its subjects*, may nevertheless be powerful in operation, as is evinced by the history of numerous patriarchs and prophets who lived before the Christian era.

Under the light of the Gospel dispensation, however, the faith of the consistent and well-instructed believer apprehends the *whole* scheme of evangelical truth. It is directed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Spirit, as to its equal and inseparable *objects:* and since God was *in Christ*, reconciling the world to himself, it follows that, among those to whom the Gospel is proposed, *they* only rightly believe in the Father, who believe also in the Son.

The faith by which the Christian is saved, is indeed very frequently declared to be faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of men. As sinners, we are justified before God, by placing our reliance on the Messiah, whom the Father sent into the world to make an atonement for the sins of mankind, —who loved us and gave *himself* for us.

This faith is the means through which we receive the Holy Spirit, by whom we are regenerated and sanctified.

Lastly, a saving faith in Jesus is not merely intellectual—it springs from the heart, works by love, gradually accepts the Saviour in all his offices, and gently constrains the Christian to take up his daily cross and FOLLOW CHRIST.

And now, before we bring this section to its conclusion, it is desirable that our most serious attention should be directed to the *contrast* so clearly drawn in Scripture, between the respective effects of *believing*, and of *not believing*, in the Gospel, and in Christ. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; *he that believeth not shall be condemned:*" Mark xvi. 16. "He that hath the Son hath life; *and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life:*" 1 John v. 12. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and

he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God *abideth* on him :" John iii. 36.

These awful passages of Scripture may be regarded as the plain and positive enunciations of a *divine decree;* and this decree will, I believe, be found, on examination, to be both *reasonable* and *just.*

That it is reasonable will presently appear, from the consideration of the actual condition of unregenerate man. We are by nature the children of wrath. Prone to iniquity, and transgressors from the womb, we are alienated from God who is the source of all happiness; and, in the world to come, eternal separation from him, and, therefore, eternal misery, is the appointed consequence of our evil doings. Now, God has ordained a plan of divine mercy and wisdom for our redemption—a plan through which we may be reconciled to his favour, and delivered from guilt and sin; and *faith* is that principle in the human mind, by which alone, (according to the known constitution of our nature) this plan can be accepted and applied. Since, then, the believer accepts the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and applies it to his own condition, it follows in reason, that the believer is saved; and, on the other hand, since the unbeliever rejects it, and refuses to avail himself of its provisions, it equally follows in reason, that the unbeliever is not saved. He is subject, like other men, by nature, to the wrath of God: and, since he neglects or refuses to avail himself of the only means by which that wrath can be removed, the consequence is plain and inevitable—the wrath of God *abideth* (*or continueth*) on him.

When the halt, the withered, the sick, and the blind, surrounded the Son of God on earth, those of them who believed in his mercy and power, *drew near to him* that they might be healed; and the capacity of receiving the desired blessing was, in every one of them, in exact proportion to the measure of his faith. "According to thy faith be it unto thee," was the *natural*, the *necessary* law, upon which the Saviour uniformly acted in dispensing these external benefits; and, in the order of God's providence, where there was no faith there could also be no *cure.* And

thus it is with all mankind. In a moral and spiritual point of view we are, without a single exception, corrupt and diseased; and except we are healed, eternal death is our inevitable allotment. Now, the Redeemer of men is our only physician, and his Gospel our only remedy. If, then, we are destitute of faith in him—that is to say, if we are destitute of the motive of action, by which alone we can draw near to the physician, and accept his remedy—we must abide by the consequence; we must, in the very nature of things, die of our disease.

And, secondly, the divine decree which we are now engaged in contemplating is in its nature *moral*, and, therefore, in its principle, undeniably *just*. It is not the helpless and the ignorant—it is not those who have never been visited with the clear light of revelation—who are the objects of its condemning clauses. Much less is it to be imagined, that these awful declarations are directed against a class of persons, who, though for a time encompassed with darkness, and vexed with doubts on the subject of religion, are honestly and earnestly engaged in pursuit of *the truth;* or who, being convinced of it, are nevertheless so painfully sensible of their lost condition, that they venture not to appropriate its glorious promises. Such persons may surely be encouraged, with all prayer and supplication, to persevere in their course—"to *follow on to* know the Lord,"—for "the meek will (God) guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way;" (Psalm xxv. 9;) and, while from those who are "wise and prudent" he hides the secrets of his redeeming love, he is still graciously pleased to reveal them unto babes:" Luke x. 21. That which the Scripture so peremptorily condemns, is neither the unenlightened intellect, nor the infirm and morbid spirit, but "AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF IN DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD:" Heb. iii. 12. Now, this evil heart of unbelief is distinguished by certain plain characteristics, which afford an ample evidence of the *immorality* of the unbeliever, and, therefore, of the moral nature—the essential justice—of the decree by which he is condemned. These

characteristics are pride, negligence, and a love of darkness as a cover for sin.

Of all the evil propensities which infect our fallen nature, none are more prevalent than pride; and, since man is *naturally* proud, he is also *naturally* infidel. He believes not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because he is too much occupied with himself, and too well satisfied with his own wisdom and righteousness, to be capable of any just apprehension of the suitableness of that Gospel to his own condition. Conceiving himself to be "rich and increased with goods," and in "need of nothing;" (Rev. iii. 17;) he is exalted against the knowledge of God, and spurns the humiliating tidings of his own vileness, and of salvation *only* through a crucified Redeemer. And this condition of proud unbelief is inseparably connected with the spirit of *rebellion*—the spirit which determines us to be our own masters, and to reject the government of our almighty Creator. "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be ye very desolate, saith the Lord; for my people have committed two evils: *they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water!*" Jer. ii. 12, 13.

The lofty and rebellious spirit of the unbeliever, in the second place, is evinced by nothing more commonly or more clearly, than by his *negligence* of religion. The information communicated, and the proposals made to us, by divine revelation, are, if authentic, of infinite importance; and no man can with reason deny, that they are accompanied with evidences of their celestial origin, which are, at least, strong enough to demand a diligent and serious examination. But he who is actuated by "an evil heart of unbelief," is, for the most part, destitute of any *regard* for these matters. He passes them by: he searches not into them. Or, if, in any degree, he directs his attention to the evidences of revelation, he approaches not the subject in that teachable and *impartial* spirit, and with that earnest desire for divine illumination, which are absolutely *essential* to the comprehension and reception of divine truth.

The unbeliever is, therefore, justly condemned as an *immoral* being—as one who sins against God—as one who is guilty of pride, rebellion, and culpable negligence. Lastly, the evil heart of unbelief is abominable in the sight of God, and is justly condemned, because it prefers darkness to light, and because this preference has no other *root* than a pertinacious adherence to a corrupt and sinful condition. The infidel secretly cleaves to his iniquities, and, therefore, covets the darkness by which they are concealed. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil:*" John iii. 18, 19.

Those, therefore, who would enjoy the privileges promised to believers in the present life, and lay hold of their eternal reward in the life to come, must strive to avoid, in every respect, the character which has now been depicted. If we take a just view of our own lost condition, humble ourselves in the sight of God, trust in his mercy and power, and submit to his spiritual government—if we give diligent heed to the word of his truth, as well as to the evidences on which it rests—if, above all, we freely open our hearts to that pure light of heaven, which condemns for iniquity, and leads into all honour, glory, virtue, and peace—we shall never be numbered amongst those who believe not, and who, therefore, perish. Although we may be sometimes harassed with doubts, and cast down, for the trial of our faith, into mental darkness and distress, that faith will, nevertheless, be found a substantial, inherent, principle, and will *never* be destroyed. Finally, since faith is a moral qualification—a Christian grace—a fruit of the Spirit—and, therefore, unquestionably, a divine gift—let us seek it where it may be found, *at the throne of mercy*—let us not cease to *pray*, that, together with *hope* and *charity*, it may more and more abound in us, to our own peace, and to the glory of God our Saviour!

PART II.

ON OBEDIENCE.

Since God is the Author of our existence, and of every mental and bodily faculty, of which we are in possession—since his power and authority over us are unlimited and supreme—and, since he is himself a perfect as well as an infinite Being—we cannot for a moment hesitate to acknowledge, that he has a right to dispose of us as he pleases, and to regulate all our conduct according to his will; and our conformity to that will, although it may involve the surrender of ourselves, and of all our degenerate inclinations, is plainly nothing more than our "reasonable service."

This doctrine lies at the foundation of true morality, which does not consist in our adherence to any system of human invention, however plausible or excellent it may be, but solely in obedience to the revealed will—or, in other words, to *the law*—of the moral Governor of the universe. Such, under a variety of forms, is the clear and frequent declaration of the book of God. In the Bible, and primarily in the Bible only, we are explicitly taught, that all our virtue and happiness depends upon our being conformed to the will of him who is the Creator and Lord of all things, and who is holy, just, and true. While the Stoics lay the stress of their moral philosophy on the "eternal fitness of things,"—the Academics, on that which may be supposed to resemble "the highest good,"—and the Epicureans, on the pursuit of happiness—the sacred writers have superseded all speculation on the subject, by declaring, that the *law of God* is the only true rule of life—that obedience to his law is *righteousness*, and the transgression of it *sin*.

In the beginning God imparted his commandments to our first parents; and, while they continued in all things to obey their divine Master, they preserved his

image in themselves—they maintained their original character of perfect righteousness. But they were made liable to temptation, and the transgression of his laws—their first act of disobedience—was the *sin* which caused their own degradation, and the fall of their whole species. But, degraded as man is under the baneful influence of this mournful event, God has been pleased to bestow upon him, in all ages, those "reproofs of instruction," which "are the way of life:" Prov. vi. 23. He has graciously communicated to us a law, by which we may so regulate our conduct in the world, as to obtain happiness, both here and hereafter.

It will, I presume, be without difficulty allowed, that these observations are in a general, yet very important, sense, applicable to all men, whether they are partakers in the benefit of an outward revelation, or are left to that which is usually described as *the light of nature*. If we admit that mankind, without an outward revelation, are nevertheless sinners, we must also admit that mankind, without such a revelation, are nevertheless in possession of the law of God; for we are expressly told by one apostle, that "where no law is, there is no transgression;" (Rom. iv. 15;) and by another, that "sin is the transgression of the law;" (1 John iii. 4;)—declarations which obviously correspond with the dictates of sound reason.

The law to which I now allude, and which is universally bestowed upon men, is that *moral sense* of right and wrong, by which the natural conscience is directed and illuminated, and to which, unless perverted by prejudice, or seared by the fatal operation of vice, it never fails to "*bear witness.*" The apostle Paul has adverted, in a clear and forcible manner, to the *law* which is thus written by the finger of the Deity on the heart of man; he has also described its operation, and has declared, that those persons who obey it "shall be justified." "For not the hearers of the law," he says, "are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, (i. e. have not the *written law,*) do *by nature* the things contained in the

law; these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law *written in their hearts*, their conscience also *bearing witness*, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another;" (Rom. ii. 13—15;) and, again, in addressing the Jews, he soon afterwards says, "shall not uncircumcision, which is *by nature*, if it *fulfil the law*, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?" verse 27.[6]

Thus it appears, that there were individuals, in ancient times, destitute of an outward revelation, who nevertheless obeyed the will of our Heavenly Father, as it is made manifest in the heart—persons who were taught of God, to fear him and to "work righteousness;" and, on the other hand, the multitude of the Gentiles, who gave themselves up to idolatrous and other vicious practices, were condemned for this very reason, that they sinned against the light of nature; and both practised and promoted iniquity, *although they knew* "the judgment (or the righteous decision[7]) of God, *that they which commit such things are worthy of death:*" Rom. i. 32.[8]

[6] When we remember the comprehensive account almost immediately afterwards given, by the apostle Paul, of the utter corruption of unregenerate man, (Rom. iii. 9—19), and call to mind his subsequent declaration respecting himself—"I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing," (vii. 18) —we cannot consistently attribute to him the doctrine, that the Gentiles were enabled, *by any of their merely natural faculties*, to fulfil the law of God. No man surely, since the fall, can possibly have fulfilled that law, except through the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is obvious, that, in Rom. ii. 13—15, 27, a condition of *nature* is advanced in antithesis not to one of *grace* but to one in which men enjoyed the benefit of *an external revelation*. For my own part I beg it may be understood, that by "the light of *nature*," I mean, simply, the light which God has communicated to the souls of men independently of an outwardly revealed religion.

[7] τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ.—These words are well translated in the Horæ Romanæ of R. Cox, M. A., (a valuable little work lately published,) "*the rule of right (ordained) by God.*"

[8] For a further elucidation of this branch of the subject, the reader may peruse Bishop Butler's dissertation on the *Nature of Virtue*, printed as an appendix to his admirable work, "*on the*

But, the declarations of Scripture respecting *obedience*, like those concerning faith, relate, for the most part, to those persons only who enjoy the benefit of an outward revelation. It would be difficult now to determine, in what degree the general mass of mankind are still benefited by the traditional influence of such a revelation; but it will not be disputed by any persons who bow to the authority of Scripture history, that during all ages, from the beginning of the world to the present day, God has preserved for himself, from among men, a *visible church*—consisting of persons, on whom he has bestowed, by means of extraordinary communications, a far clearer and more definite knowledge of his will, than can be obtained through the medium of merely natural religion. That a part, if not the whole, of mankind, *before the flood*, were favoured with successive declarations of the *law of God*, may be safely concluded from the assertion of the apostle Peter, that Christ "went and preached" unto them "by the Spirit"—that is, doubtless, through the appointed instrumentality of an inspired ministry; (1 Peter iii. 18, 19;) and Noah is, by the same apostle, expressly described as a "preacher of righteousness:" 2 Peter ii. 15. Nor can it be reasonably questioned, that the same character attached to many of his descendants—such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Job—and that the moral law of God, in connexion with some obscure, yet animating, indications of his Gospel, continued to be promulgated on divine authority, within the limits of the Lord's visible church, from the days of the flood to those of the Mosaic institution.

It is probable, that under that institution the moral law was more fully developed, than it had ever before been, since the fall of our species. It was also placed upon record, for the perpetual instruction of the Israelitish nation: and what was the substance of this law? It was, *that they should love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with*

Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed, to the constitution and course of Nature."

all their mind; and their neighbour as themselves. "On these two commandments," said the Saviour of men, "hang all the law and the prophets:" Matt. xxii. 37—40. And the moral code, thus graciously imparted to the Israelites, was never to be out of sight or hearing—it was to accompany them whithersoever they went—it was to be kept in never-failing recollection. "These words which I command thee this day," said Jehovah to his people, "shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates:" Deut. vi. 6—9.

But it was not only the unchangeable law of morality which God revealed to his children, under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations. That great scheme of special providence, which was preparatory to the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, and to the general diffusion among mankind of his glorious Gospel, was conducted through the instrumentality of the Lord's servants; and thus it became their duty to render a ready obedience to a vast variety of positive precepts, arising out of an equal variety of occasions; and yet, all tending directly or indirectly to the same great end. It was not, for example, in pursuance of their own desires, but in obedience to the revealed will of Jehovah, that Abel offered his significant sacrifice—that Noah built the ark—that Abraham became a stranger and a pilgrim in an unknown land, and offered up his only-begotten son—that Moses led the Israelites from Egypt to the land of promise—that Joshua destroyed the Canaanitish nations—that Samuel anointed Saul and David—and that Solomon built a temple for the honour of God, and for the temporary maintenance of a sacrificial worship.

On a very similar ground appears to rest the whole ceremonial law of the Jews. It was ordained for a season, and was intended to answer particular purposes

in the progress of that line of Providence, which was destined to issue in the incarnation of the Messiah, and in the general diffusion of divine truth. And, since a compliance with these positive injunctions—injunctions of which the reasons were, to a certain degree, concealed from those on whom they were imposed—required, in the nature of things, a stronger exertion of the principle of faith, than a submission to the moral law alone; we cannot but admire the mercy and wisdom of Jehovah, who accompanied his *extraordinary* commandments to men with a long series of conspicuous miracles, which afforded an ample evidence that those commandments were of divine origin.

But, whatsoever was the bearing and direction of the word of the Lord—whether his commandments were only positive, and ordained for a season, or simply moral, and therefore unchangeable—it is clear, that unqualified obedience was the duty required in those persons to whom his word was revealed. Such is the plain dictate of reason, and such the frequently occurring declaration of Holy Writ. "OBEY my voice," said Jehovah to the Israelites, "and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people, and walk ye in ALL THE WAYS that I have commanded you:" Jer. vii. 23. "If ye will OBEY my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people, for all the earth is mine!" Exod. xix. 5.

Here it may be well for us to fix our attention on two general observations which our premises can scarcely fail to suggest to the reflecting reader. He will, in the first place, remark, that the principle of *faith* lies at the foundation of the principle of *obedience*. Without faith in the existence and authority of the Supreme Being, there can, in the nature of things, be no obedience to his commands; and therefore, in the view of the writers of Scripture, no true righteousness—no availing virtue or morality. And, secondly, since God has an undoubted right to an absolute government over his own creatures—since, also, he is a perfectly moral Being, and is pleased

with no disposition of the human mind, which is not productive of a good moral result—it may be reasonably inferred, that our faith in God can be of no value or advantage in his sight, or, in other words, can never be the means of our *justification*, unless it is of such a nature as to lead *into obedience to his revealed will;* that is to say, into *good works*. Now, I apprehend, that these two positions contain the substance of the memorable doctrine of the apostle James, respecting *faith* and *works*.

"What doth it profit, my brethren," says the apostle, "though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked or destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and be ye filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.....Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect (or completed![9]) And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.....For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also:" James ii. 14—26.

This passage was, probably, intended as an explanatory addition to the well-known declaration of the apostle Paul, that "*a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law:*" Rom. iii. 28. That it offers no *contradiction* to that declaration, a very slight consideration of its contents will serve to evince. The apostle James is here pleading for the superstructure of works; but the foundation on which he builds

[9] ἐτελειώθη.

that superstructure is, exclusively, *faith*. We cannot indeed trace the history of Abraham without perceiving that the two apostles are in substantial accordance with each other. Abraham, like other men, was a sinner; but he cast himself by faith on the Lord, believing in his word; and it was in consequence of his doing so, that he received the *forgiveness of his sins*. His faith was counted unto him for righteousness. As a penitent transgressor, he was justified by faith, *without the deeds of the law*. But his faith was a living faith. It operated as a powerful practical principle in his soul. It wrought with his works, and by works it was *completed*. When he offered up Isaac on the altar, this was indeed the final triumph—the perfect victory—of his belief in the promise of God, that, *through this very Isaac*, he should become the father of many nations. Thus, therefore, was "the Scripture fulfilled, which saith, Abraham *believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness:*" and thus, at the same time, we perceive "*how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.*"

While, however, it is satisfactory to observe, that this remarkable passage in no degree undermines the great doctrine of justification by faith *without the deeds of the law*, we ought, in the consideration of its contents, *chiefly* to direct our attention to the unspeakably important point, on which the stress of the apostle's argument is evidently laid. Let every one who professes a belief in the only true God hold in perpetual remembrance, that vain is the conviction of his understanding—vain the correctness of his creed—dead and unprofitable all his faith—unless he is humbly endeavouring to bring forth those fruits of a virtuous obedience, which a Being of perfect holiness, and absolute sovereignty, is requiring at his hands.

Having premised these general observations on faith and works, we may proceed to consider our present subject, as it relates more especially to the *dispensation of the Gospel*.

The law is declared, by the apostle Paul, to be "a

schoolmaster," to bring us "unto Christ;" (Gal. iii. 24;) a declaration, which, in one point of view, is of universal application, but which was evidently, in a particular manner, directed to the case of the apostle's fellow-countrymen, the Jews. While that people groaned under the pressure of an extensive ceremonial institution, they were incapable, in their own strength, of fulfilling even the moral injunctions of the Mosaic code; and to such of them as were awakened to any just sense of their true condition, it must have been evident, that the curse pronounced against every one, who continued not "in all the things which were written in the book of the law to do them," was recorded for their condemnation. In the mean time, however, many of the ritual provisions, under the burthen of which they suffered, were calculated to point their attention to their Messiah; and, by the whole system of their law, they were "shut up" from the false religions of their heathen neighbours, and kept, as it were, *under tutelage*, for Christ at his coming.

It appears, then, that the Jewish law, with its terrors on the one hand, and its types and protecting sanctions on the other, was, in an eminent manner, calculated to prepare the Hebrews for their Almighty Redeemer —for him who was to break all their bands asunder —deliver them from the burthen of their ceremonies —and unite them with the Gentile believers, in the fellowship of the same pure and unalterable faith. And, although the multitude of the nation rejected the Messiah, and despised his offers of emancipation, there were not a few among them who, like the apostle Paul, forsook their dangerous dependence on a ritual worship, and were made willing to suffer the loss of all things, that they might win Christ. They knew that the law, in which they had formerly trusted, did but sentence them to death; and now, in unison with the believing Gentiles who were alike condemned by the law of natural religion, they took refuge with their Saviour, that he might wash away their guilt in the fountain of his blood, and cover them with the robe of his own righteousness. Thus were the original converts to Christianity, like their suc-

cessors in every age of the church, *justified by the faith of Christ, without the deeds of the law.*

Now, after explaining the method which God has thus appointed for the justification of sinners, the apostle Paul proceeds to ask himself a question of the highest moment: "Do we then," he says, "make void the law by faith?" It is to be feared, that some persons have so much misconstrued the doctrines of truth, that they are ready to give to this question an affirmative answer, under the false and dangerous notion, that, for those who are delivered from the terrors of the law, through faith in the blood of Christ, the *law itself*, with all its wise and holy provisions, is no longer in force. Such persons, it is supposed, were the Nicolaitans of the infant church; nor will it be disputed, that the same description is partially applicable to many professing Christians in the present day. The apostle, however, replies to his own question with a strong, and even indignant negative—"God forbid!" he cries, "yea, we *establish the law:*" Rom. iii. 31.

It is true, indeed, that the ceremonial law of the Jews, "which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation," (Heb. ix. 10) was at once fulfilled and abrogated by the sacrifice of the Messiah.

But the moral law of God, which the same apostle, elsewhere, describes as "holy, and just, and good," (Rom. vii. 12;) is eternal, like its Author, and capable of no abrogation. Christianity "marks it for her own," and confirms and establishes *all* its provisions. *This* was the law, of which our Saviour evidently spake, when he taught his disciples to surpass the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were strict in the performance of ceremony, and immoral in life and conversation. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil; for verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, *one jot* or *one tittle* shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.... Except your righteousness shall ex-

ceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven:" Matt. v. 17—20.

But although the moral law of God is, in its nature, eternal and unchangeable, it may, I think, be concluded from the records of Scripture, that the revelation of it to mankind has been gradually progressive. Under the dispensation of Judaism, and still more so, probably, during the anterior ages of the church, some things, in condescension to the ignorance and weakness of men, were permitted, for a season, which, although not inconsistent with the law of God, *as far as it was then revealed*, are no longer allowed to believers on the discovery of a fuller and clearer light. Now, this is surely one of the principal glories of Christianity, that it not only establishes the moral law of God, to the extent in which it was previously received and understood, but enlarges its provisions, and unfolds it to the view of mankind, in all its purity, comprehensiveness, strength, and perfection. It is the lawgiver of the *Christian* dispensation who searches the inmost recesses of the heart, calls for an absolute holiness in motive and thought, as well as in word and action; demolishes the narrow boundaries of national prejudice; proclaims an universal charity and love; and fears not to concentrate his whole preceptive code in the *awful* injunction—"BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT, EVEN AS YOUR FAEHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN IS PERFECT:" Matt. v. 48: *compare* Eph. v. 1. And, further, he requires of his disciples, not merely faith in his blood, but obedience to *all* his commandments. He declares, that those only who hear his sayings and *do them*, are building their house on the rock. He says to his disciples, of every name and in every age, "He that hath my commandments, and *keepeth them*, he it is that loveth me:" John xiv. 21. "Ye are my friends, if ye *do* WHATSOEVER I command you:" xv. 14.

Here I may once more allude to a subject already adverted to in the course of these Essays—the *example* of Jesus Christ. Christ hath left us "an example" that we "should follow his steps:" 1 Peter ii. 21.

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, *even as he walked :*" 1 John ii. 6 : *comp.* John xiii. 15, &c. If the anxious inquiry is sometimes excited in our minds, by pursuing what particular course of conduct we may imitate the perfection of our Heavenly Father? these, and such as these, are the passages of Scripture by which that inquiry must be answered. We must humbly endeavour, in our life and conversation, to resemble *him*, who is the IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD—in whom all moral attributes of the Deity, without losing a single particle of their excellence, are brought within the scope of our intellectual perception, and reduced to the level of our circumstances and our practice. Let the Christian reflect on the character and conduct of his incarnate Redeemer. Let him meditate on the sinless purity of the heart of Jesus ; on his meekness, gentleness, and forbearance ; on his condescension and humility ; on his devotional spirit ; on his unqualified dedication to the Father's will ; on his boldness in asserting the truth ; on his zeal, patience, and fortitude ; on his perfect fidelity and integrity ; on the universal diffusiveness of his love and charity—and let him habitually aim at a practical conformity to this perfect model. It is only by *putting on the Lord Jesus Christ*, that we can maintain the character of consistent disciples, or comply with the unalterable injunctions of the law of God.

On the whole, then, it appears, with great clearness, that, under the light of Christianity, the revealed moral law of God is neither abolished, nor in any degree weakened, but, on the contrary, confirmed and enlarged ; and, that the *standard* by which the followers of Jesus are required to regulate their conduct and conversation, is, in various respects, more exalted and comprehensive than any which was ever before proposed to the attention of man. Now, there is ever to be observed in the provisions of divine wisdom, an *evenness* of design and operation ; and, on a recurrence to the successive dispensations, of which we find a record in Scripture, we can scarcely fail to perceive, that the extent of the revelation of the

moral law has always corresponded with the extent of the revelation of doctrinal truth.

Under the Mosaic institution, doctrinal truth, on the one hand, and the moral law, on the other, were in several points of view only partially unfolded: under the dispensation of the Gospel, both are revealed to us in their fulness. Now as faith in the religion of the Jews was sufficient to sustain an obedience to the law, as it was prescribed to the Jews; so faith, in the religion of Christians—if it be indeed a living principle working by love—will also be found sufficient to sustain an obedience to the law, as it is enjoined on Christians. If we reflect on all the glorious features of the scheme of redemption—on the compassion of our heavenly Father, as displayed in the coming of his Son—on the condescension and all-availing sacrifice of Emanuel, God with us—and if these great truths make their way, by faith, to our hearts, we are furnished with the most generous and powerful of motives, to the full surrender of our own will to the will of the Supreme Being. We are impelled, "by *the mercies of God*" in Christ Jesus, to present our bodies "a living sacrifice." Delivered from the power of darkness, through faith in the Blood of the covenant, and "translated into the kingdom" of the "dear Son" of God, we find it to be at once our indispensable duty, and our highest privilege, to submit ourselves to his government, to follow his example, and to obey the *whole* of his law.

Nor ought it to be forgotten, that by that clear revelation of a future eternity of rewards and punishments, which form so principal a feature of the religion of Christ, another motive is communicated to the human mind—a motive of infinite weight and importance—by which, if we act on reasonable principles, we may well be induced to deny ourselves—to crucify our affections and lusts—and, with all holy patience and perseverance, to "press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus:" Phil. iii. 14.

But, Christianity not only furnishes us with higher motives to a life of obedience and virtue, than were ever presented to mankind through any other medium;

it also promises us the more abundant effusion of that pure and powerful influence, by which alone we can ever be enabled rightly to understand, or adequately to practise, the moral law of God. The true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is *taught* of the Spirit, and the law of his Redeemer is written, with a *preeminent* degree of clearness and efficacy, on the tablets of his heart. "After those days, saith the Lord," (in obvious reference to the times of the Messiah), "*I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*, and will be their God, and they shall be my people; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, *for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them*, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more:" Jer. xxxi. 33, 34: *comp.* Heb. viii. 8; x. 16, 17. Finally, the "Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," by which the children of God are thus impressed and instructed, is powerful not only to illuminate, but (as we have already remarked) to *cleanse* and *sanctify*. Those who are subjected to its influence, and are made willing to obey its injunctions, have no need to shrink from the contemplation of the extent and purity of Christian morality. Conscious of their inability to do any good thing in their own strength, they will cast themselves, without reserve, on the love and power of a compassionate Saviour; and while, in the midst of all their infirmities, they derive a sure consolation from the intercession of Jesus, they will be enabled, *by his grace*, to walk as obedient children, "perfecting holiness in the fear of God:" 2 Cor. vii. 1.

On surveying the whole of our present argument, we have to recollect,

That, since God is the *Creator*, and supreme as well as righteous *Governor* of the world, he has an undoubted claim upon us for implicit obedience to his revealed will.

That such an obedience is the only rule of action allowed by the sacred writers—that it constitutes *righteousness*, and that the contrary to it is *sin*.

That the commandments of Jehovah were communicated to our first parents, and that, through their transgression of one of them, sin and death entered into the world.

That, nevertheless, God has universally bestowed on their descendants, a law for the regulation of their conduct, by obedience to which they may obtain happiness.

That a moral sense of right and wrong was impressed on the hearts of the Gentiles, who had no acquaintance with an outward revelation—that some of them obeyed its dictates, and were, therefore, accepted—and that others, who disobeyed them, were condemned, because they sinned against the known law of God.

That God has, in all ages of the world, bestowed on his visible church, through the medium of inspiration, *a clear external revelation of his will;* that the law of righteousness was *preached* to his people, both before and after the flood, and under the Jewish institution, was yet more clearly developed, and was recorded in writing.

That a variety of positive commandments were also issued on different occasions for the guidance of the Israelites, and their patriarchal ancestors, chiefly in connexion with that course of special Providence which was preparatory to the incarnation of the Son of God.

That, whether the commandments communicated to them were moral or positive, the corresponding duty required of the Lord's people was that of ready and universal *obedience.*

That *faith in God* is the obvious foundation of obedience to his law; and, that no faith can be justifying in his sight, which does not produce obedience; on which principles, it appears, that the doctrines of the apostles Paul and James, on the subject of justification, are in true harmony.

That the Mosaic law was a schoolmaster to bring the Jews to Christ, in order that, together with the believing Gentiles, they might be justified by faith in him; that the ceremonial part of that law terminated

with the sacrifice of the Messiah; but, that the moral part of it is eternal, and incapable of abrogation.

That the latter, under the light of Christianity, is confirmed, enlarged, and perfected; and, that an exact obedience to it is the reasonable duty required of all believers in Jesus Christ, whose example they are taught to follow.

That the weight and extent of the motives to such obedience, arising out of the great truths of the Christian revelation, correspond with the superior elevation of that moral standard, by which, as Christians, we are bound to regulate our conduct.

And, lastly, that the operation of these motives on the mind of the true believer in Jesus, is accompanied by the communication of that gift of the Holy Spirit, by which men are internally illuminated with a knowledge of the divine law, and actually enabled to *fulfil* its requisitions.

In conclusion, I would venture to suggest to the reader's attention one or two practical observations.

It is a truth which reason deduces from the attributes of God, and which is amply confirmed by revelation, that virtuous actions, and a course of true morality, have an unfailing tendency to promote the happiness of the persons who practise them, and of mankind in general. But, although this tendency is unalterable, and the effect *in the end* certain, yet it sometimes happens, that some degree of moral evil appears to be expedient, in order to the production of greater *present* good; and it is a lamentable fact, that under such circumstances, a departure from the never-varying rule of a righteous principle, is partially allowed by some of our Christian moralists, and is actually, to a very great extent, applied to practice, both by individuals and by nations professing the religion of Jesus. How often, for example, do individuals *compromise* the divine law of *truth*, in order to avoid the pain and inconvenience which its unbroken maintenance would appear to entail upon them! and how generally is it considered *allowable* in Christian governments to institute and pursue political measures imagined to be of advantage to the state; yet opposed,

nevertheless, in various respects to the principles of the law of God!

To such a line of conduct we are often tempted, because in our ignorance we see a very little way before us; but were the secrets of a boundless future unfolded in our view—did we know as we are known—we should instantly perceive its injuriousness and its folly. Certain it is, however, that true Christianity teaches us better things. It shews us that the will of our heavenly Father is always right—that his moral law is of universal application—that it is (as it were) like its divine Author, omnipresent; following the people of God through every variation of time and circumstance—finally, that in despite of the dictates of human policy, there is to be found no permanent security—no solid happiness—in any other course of human action, than in that of *unvarying* and *unreserved obedience.*

Lastly, let us carefully notice, and endeavour always to remember, that infidelity and rebellion, faith and obedience, respectively, are of such a nature, that they never fail to act and react—to produce and reproduce each other. Infidelity is the root of rebellion against God; and rebellion against God is ever found to be productive of yet greater infidelity. The Israelites refused to believe in the word of the Lord; and, in consequence of their unbelief, they became a disobedient, or in other words, a *sinful* people. And what was the effect of their sinfulness? The blindness of the eye, the hardness of the heart, and the heaviness of the ear—an infidelity so confirmed and aggravated, that they scorned their Messiah, and were totally *incapacitated* for the reception of his Gospel.

To reverse the picture—faith (as we have already observed) is the parent of obedience—for it is only as we believe in God and in his Son, that we can possibly feel the least disposition to obey their commandments; and truly, throughout the whole progress of our Christian course, nothing short of the power of *faith* can enable us to discard, in our practice, that carnal system of expediency, to which I have just alluded, and to walk, without deviation, in obedience

to the law of God. On the other hand, obedience is the life, the strength, and the completion, of faith. Those who do the will of the Father, know of the doctrine of Christ, that it is indeed of God: John vii. 17. Every successive step we take, in a course of virtuous submission to the divine will, has a sure tendency to bring us into nearer communion with our heavenly Father—to quicken our spiritual apprehension—to enlarge our religious experience—and to confirm our settlement on the immutable basis of THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS.

CONCLUSION.

HAVING, in the Essays which are now brought to their conclusion, presented to the reader's attention an elementary sketch of the evidences which prove the truth of Christianity, and the divine origin of the Holy Scriptures; and having examined all the *essential* features (as I apprehend) of that system of divine love and wisdom, of which those Scriptures contain the record, I may now invite him to a brief review of the general course of my whole argument.

Let us, then, suppose that an honest inquirer after *truth* is induced, for the first time in his life, to peruse the New Testament. He soon discovers that it is no common book. He finds that it abounds in wise precepts, and that it states, in a manner at once simple and authoritative, a variety of doctrines respecting both God and man, which, if true, are of infinite weight and importance. He observes more particularly, that it delineates the history and character of a perfectly virtuous person, who, unlike all other men, is described as uniting with an abject outward condition, and with a very unusual degree of humility, an authority and power indicative of a nature *essentially divine;* and he reads that this person was crucified by the Jews, and that his death was appointed and accepted of the Father, as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Struck with the extraordinary contents of this wonderful book, and humbled in the view of the mysteries which it unfolds, the first questions which present

themselves to the mind of the inquirer are these—Is this volume *genuine?* Is it of the antiquity to which it pretends? Were its respective parts really written, as they profess to have been, by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, and Jude—i. e. by six of the apostles of Jesus Christ, and two of their companions? On these points he pursues a diligent course of investigation, and the facts which he ascertains are as follows:—that in the early part of the fourth century, (as appears from the declaration of a well-known and impartial writer,) about seven eighths of the whole New Testament were, throughout Christendom, *universally confessed to be genuine*—that the same character was soon afterwards attributed, in the church, to the remaining part of the volume—that, during the course of two hundred years before that period, innumerable quotations were made from the New Testament by the *fathers*, whose works in the Greek and Latin languages are still extant—that to these quotations were added, by certain ecclesiastical writers, catalogues of the books of the New Testament, harmonies of the four Gospels, and extensive commentaries—that, during the second, third, and fourth centuries, several versions were made of the whole volume, into foreign languages, some of which versions are in our hands—that the genuineness of the Gospels and Epistles was allowed by the bitterest enemies of early Christianity—lastly, that these evidences are amply confirmed by others of an internal nature—viz. first, the Hebraistic Greek in which the whole book is written; secondly, the correct allusions which it contains to the customs prevalent, at the Christian era, among both the Jews and Romans, as well as to a variety of historical events (whether more or less obscure) which are, from other sources, known to have then taken place; and thirdly, the reciprocal incidental accordances, and general congruity, of its several independent parts.

On the ground of these various and accumulated evidences, our inquirer is at length well satisfied, that the genuineness of the professed works of the apostles and evangelists (or of nearly all of them) is far more

largely attested, and, on the whole, more satisfactorily ascertained, than that which nobody ever dreams of disputing—the genuineness of the Olympics of Pindar, of the Georgics of Virgil, of the Offices of Cicero, or of the Annals of Tacitus.

Next in order comes the important question—Is the history contained in the volume thus proved to be genuine—*a true history?* On this subject the inquirer would have felt no temptation to entertain doubts, had not many of the events, recorded in the New Testament, been of a miraculous nature; but such being the fact, he does himself the justice of investigating, before he decides. Now, in the course of his investigation, he makes the following observations—viz. that two of the evangelists were eye-witnesses of the works of Jesus, and the other two companions of eye-witnesses—that in the four Gospels are to be observed, at once a variety so natural as plainly to indicate independence, and a harmony so extensive as to afford a moral demonstration of truth—that the fidelity of the historian of the Acts of the Apostles is equally evinced by the incidental correspondence of that book with the Epistles of Paul—that, independently of all such reciprocal coincidence, the history of the New Testament affords in its several parts, considered singly, ample internal evidences of the simplicity, honesty, caution, and absolute veracity, of its authors—that all the twelve apostles, and many others, were engaged in bearing testimony to the miracles and resurrection of Christ—that they sealed that testimony (a testimony not to notions but to *facts*) by a willing submission to almost unexampled suffering, and even to death itself—that the history of the New Testament is, in various important particulars, confirmed by the corresponding declarations of Jewish and profane authors—that the miraculous parts of it were noticed and confessed by the enemies of our religion—finally, that early Christianity was diffused among mankind, to an extent, and with a rapidity, for which (under all the circumstances of the case) nothing can account, but the reality of our Lord's miracles, and those of the apostles.

Fully convinced, on these and other corresponding evidences, of the *authenticity* of the evangelical history, the man who is in search after truth now experiences a fresh delight in the perusal of it, and in the contemplation of that divine person, whose life and character it principally delineates. More especially he is led to reflect on the *miracles* of Jesus and his apostles. Their clearness, their publicity, their greatness, their variety, and the merciful and holy purposes to which they are directed, rise up in order before his view; and the result is a clear decision of his judgment—a firm, unalterable, persuasion of mind—that they can be justly attributed neither to the ingenuity of man, nor to the more powerful devices of evil spirits, but were effected by "the finger" of that Being who is alone all-wise and almighty. And, since they were wrought in attestation of Christianity, he is at length, on the most satisfactory principles, brought to the conclusion, that Christianity is of divine authority—that it is the religion of God himself.

But, the proof of Christianity is cumulative; nor is our inquirer satisfied without endeavouring to embrace at least the principal features of the whole subject. Accordingly, in pursuing his delightful research, he soon discovers that Christianity is attested not only by the supernatural works of Jesus and his followers, but by that standing and most comprehensive miracle —prophecy connected with its fulfilment. Having satisfied himself of the genuineness of the Hebrew Scriptures (which rests on grounds very similar to those already urged in reference to the New Testament (he is greatly interested in observing that both divisions of the Sacred Volume are distinguished by an admirable line of prophecy, continued from age to age in the church, relating to a vast variety of circumstances, and already, to a very great extent, fulfilled by events on record. His attention, however, is particularly directed to those predictions by which Christianity itself is immediately attested—namely, those which were uttered by Jesus Christ, and those of which Jesus Christ was the subject. The former in con-

nexion with their fulfilment (as far as it has already taken place) afford a proof that Jesus was a true prophet; the latter, proceeding as they did from a vast number of independent persons, living in various successive ages, correspond with the history and character of Christ, just as a lock of the most complicated structure, corresponds with its key. Since, then, an actual foreknowledge of events is the attribute of Jehovah alone, the investigating mind, whose course we are tracing, is furnished with a fresh proof—a proof no less satisfactory than its precursor—that Christianity is the religion of God.

Powerful as are the evidences of the divine origin of Christianity, derived from miracles and prophecy, our inquirer is nevertheless led to reflect that, had the professed revelation which they attest been destitute of any moral and practical importance—had it appeared to compass no other end than the gratification of human curiosity—his confidence in these evidences would have been inevitably shaken, because his mind, in that case, could never have been dispossessed of an impression, that (contrary to the analogy of all the works of Providence) there was nothing in the end to justify the means, or to account for the *apparatus*. Still more would that confidence have been shaken—still more would he have found himself placed in the centre of inextricable difficulty—had these signs, so obviously indicative of omnipotence and omniscience, accompanied the introduction of a system subversive of true piety, morality, and happiness. With these reflections in his view, there is no point to which he more closely directs his attention, than to the actual moral effects of Christianity; and in tracing its operation on mankind, he has the candour to distinguish, first, between the *mere profession*, and the *hearty reception* of it; and, secondly, between pure Christianity, as it is described in the New Testament, and Christianity curtailed or augmented, perverted or abused. The result of his observation on this subject is as follows:—that mankind are naturally prone to irreligion and immorality, and are, therefore, naturally liable to distraction and misery; and, that the

religion of Christ has an uniform tendency to counteract these natural evils—to make men pious, virtuous, and happy. On further reflection, he moreover observes, that our religion, considered as a moral science, was revealed to us by Jesus Christ and his apostles in a condition of perfection—that many of its parts are such as man in his own wisdom was unlikely to conceive, and incapable of inventing—that, nevertheless, (and although obstructions to its course may arise from extraneous causes) it is of *universal applicability* to our species—and, further, that as this is true of Christianity, so, on a deliberate comparison with other systems of religion now received in the world, it is found to be true of Christianity *alone*.

Since, then, the religion of Jesus—attested as it was by the display of the miraculous power, and actual foreknowledge, of the Supreme Being—is ascertained to be a system of the greatest practical efficacy; since the investigator finds it to be so far from producing vice and misery, that its constant result is the glory of God, and the virtue and welfare of man; since close observation has convinced him, that it is perfectly adapted to the condition of the creature, and as perfectly worthy of the character of the Creator; his mind is brought to a state of repose—his doubts are all discarded—and, although there are parts of revealed truth which are *above* his comprehension, nothing can henceforth materially weaken his conviction, that Christianity, and Christianity only, is indeed the RELIGION OF GOD.

One question however remains, respecting which he is necessarily desirous of obtaining satisfaction. Christianity is recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Are those Scriptures to be regarded as the work of man, or do they possess the same divine authority as the religion which they record? On this point he examines, first, how the matter stands as it relates to the Old Testament; and, in the indirect, yet multiplied and conclusive, testimony of Jesus Christ himself, as well as in the still more positive assertions of the apostles, he finds (as a believer in Christianity) ample evidence, that the sacred books of the Hebrews *were*

given by inspiration of God. That the same character attaches to the New Testament, he concludes, first, from analogy; and secondly, from the history of Christ and his apostles, (a history already proved to be authentic) from which he learns, that most of the writers of that volume, and probably all of them, were men actually inspired; and that, by working miracles in attestation of their doctrine, they evinced the plenary nature of their inspiration. These external evidences are confirmed by others of an internal nature. In the fulfilment of the *written* prophecy; in the wisdom of the *written* doctrine; in the purity of the *written* law —in the harmony of the contents of the Bible amidst almost endless variety—and in its efficacy, as the principal means employed by Divine Providence for the illumination, conversion, and spiritual edification, of men—the inquirer cannot fail to perceive unquestionable indications of the divine origin of Holy Writ. And, although he is aware that inspiration must vary, in manner and degree, according as it is applied to the enunciation respectively of different subjects—that it may probably be one thing in history, and another thing in doctrine and prophecy; yet, the general result of his deliberations on the subject is plainly this —that, of the Scriptures, considered as a whole, God is the primary author—that the account which they contain of religious truth rest on the authority of the Supreme Being—and, therefore, that the person who searches for that which is *revealed* may safely direct his unhesitating attention to that which is *written.*

Struck with the importance of eternal things—convinced of the truth of Christianity—and satisfied of the divine authority of that astonishing book in which all its particulars are recorded, our inquirer, who is already possessed of some little knowledge of the Sacred Volume, now turns over its pages with a new feeling of confidence and delight. To him it appears plain beyond contradiction, that it is the bounden duty of every man, who has the Bible in his hands, and who has received an adequate education—to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest, its contents; in other words,

to make a diligent and profitable use of one of the most remarkable and precious of the gifts of God to man. And in pursuing this object, he endeavours to arrange his inquiries in such a manner as to obtain, if possible, a connected and comprehensive view of the whole scheme or system of revealed truth.

Now, of all the knowledge of which man is capable, the most important and truly honourable is the knowledge of God. The very first point, therefore, of scriptural inquiry, is this—What information do we receive from the Volume of Inspiration respecting the Supreme Being himself? In answer to this inquiry, we have found occasion to observe, that the declarations of Scripture respecting Jehovah are such as confirm, enlarge, and complete, the light derived, on the subject, from merely natural religion. The investigator of divine truth, who commits himself to the guidance of the sacred writers, is presently taught, that there is no other God but Jehovah—that he is one—that he has existed from eternity—that he is the first cause of all other beings, the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things which they contain,—that he is the Supreme Governor of the universe—a Spirit—omnipotent, all-wise, omnipresent—that he unites in himself the perfection of all moral attributes—that in the government of his creatures, and especially in that of his creature man, he shows himself to be holy, just, faithful, and true, and displays an ever-abounding goodness and mercy—that he is himself LOVE.

Now, although there is no doctrine on which the patriarchs and prophets of ancient Israel have laid a stronger stress than the unity of their Deity, it is a singular fact, that they often speak of him, or introduce him as speaking, in such a manner, as indicates that in this one God there subsists a real plurality. Our inquirer is fully sensible that this subject (relating, as it does, to the nature of an infinite, incomprehensible, Being) is extremely mysterious to the finite understanding of men; but he bows with a simple and sincere heart under the authority of confessed revelation; and no sooner has he properly examined the New Testament, than he is prepared to acknowledge,

that in the vast plan of wisdom and mercy ordained for our salvation, Jehovah, the only true God, has revealed himself to mankind as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. From the testimony of Jesus Christ and his apostles he learns, that a personal character attaches to these three respectively—that the Father is *God*—that the Son is *God*—and that the Holy Spirit is *God*—that they are the united sources of our redemption and salvation, the common and equal objects of our allegiance and devotion—that, they are, nevertheless, first, second, and third, in order; and, in the economy of grace, are described as fulfilling distinct offices—the Father as *originating*—the Son as *mediating*—and the Holy Spirit as *completing*. While, however, the friend of truth embraces these distinctions with the mind of faith, and endeavours to meet them with the exercise of corresponding dispositions, and the performance of consequent duties; yet, the more diligently he reflects on them, the more fully is he persuaded of their absolute consistency with the essential and never-to-be-forgotten truth, that GOD IS ONE.

The next subject to which the inquirer is led to direct his attention, is the personal character and *history* of certain angelic powers who are declared, in Scripture, to have fallen from their heavenly state; and more especially of their powerful and insidious chief, called the devil, or Satan. Of him we read, that he is ever originating evil—that he is full of malignity—a liar from the beginning, and the father of it—the adversary of God and Christ—the tempter, accuser, and destroyer of man—that he betrayed our first parents; afflicted Job; provoked David to sin; resisted Joshua the priest; and tempted, buffeted, and persecuted, the Messiah himself. Finally, while we are assured that no other end awaits the enemy of our of our souls, and all who adhere to him, than absolute defeat and destruction, yet, in the mean time, the wrath and deceitfulness which he is at present permitted to exercise, are, in Scripture, presented to us, as the strongest of motives to watchfulness unto prayer

—to the investing of our souls, and that perpetually, with the whole armour of God.

Our inquirer now turns his attention to a branch of scriptural truth, fraught with a very peculiar degree of interest—the history, condition, prospects, and character, of our own species; and truly there is nothing by which the declarations of the Bible are more clearly distinguished from the results of merely human speculation, than by the exact and extensive information which they communicate to men respecting *themselves*. In the Scriptures he finds a clear account, in the first place, of the creation of our first parents, in that condition of natural and moral perfection, in which sin, Satan, and death, possessed no mastery over them; of their fall from that condition; of the consequent mortality of themselves and their descendants; and of the brief and withering nature of all those enjoyments which here excite their desire, and engage so much of their attention. In the second place, he observes, that the sacred writers, nevertheless, represent man as the child of eternity; and he notes a variety of passages which prove that we possess not only a mortal body, but a soul which, after death, continues to exist, and is introduced to a condition either of happiness or of suffering. He is also assured by prophets and apostles, and more especially by Jesus Christ himself, that the day is coming, when, all who "are in the graves" shall hear the voice of the Son of God—when the dead shall actually be raised, even as Christ was first raised—when the souls of men shall be invested with spiritual bodies, "this mortal" clothed with immortality, and death swallowed up in victory.

He next ascertains, on the authority of Scripture, that man is ever treated by his Creator as a *free moral agent;* that we are capable either of righteousness or of sin; that we are individually responsible to the Supreme Governor of the world, for the use we make of his gifts, and for our whole conduct and conversation; and that, in the great day of final retribution, we shall (after a rule of perfect justice and equity) be

rewarded or punished, according to our works. Nor can the searcher after truth do otherwise than tremble under the weight of his own responsibility, when he reads the plain declarations of our Saviour, couched in terms too clear to be misunderstood, and too strong to admit of any palliated interpretation, that both the rewards of the righteous and the punishments of the wicked are of eternal duration. Lastly, he finds it plainly recorded, that when Adam and Eve gave way to the first temptation of their adversary, they became transgressors, and lost the moral image of God; that from them the whole race of their descendants have inherited a nature infected with sin, and prone to evil —that all mankind, in their fallen nature, and without grace, are in a condition of darkness, and alienation from God—that we are universally sinners—and that, as such, we are individually liable to the operation of the curse of the law: "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*"

Such is the view, which the sacred writers present to us, of the condition and prospects of unregenerate man. The inquirer reads a corresponding lesson in his own heart. He is humbled in a sense of his vileness, and trembles in the view of the just judgments of an offended Deity. But despair is not his portion. While he utters the sincere and earnest cry—"A Saviour, or I die—a Redeemer, or I perish for ever!" he cannot be ignorant of the multiplied declarations of Holy Writ, that such a Saviour and Redeemer is actually provided for us.

The mysterious and exalted person to whom this description applies, is in the Old Testament described as the Messiah; in the New Testament, as the Christ —both the Hebrew and the Greek word signifying the *Anointed One;* and, being already convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was that Anointed One of whom the whole Scriptures testify, it is with the most lively feelings of interest that the friend of truth now institutes the great inquiry—*what are the nature and character of Jesus Christ?*

In order to pursue this inquiry in its true order, he directs his attention to *the history of the Son of God,*

as it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures. He finds it declared in the New Testament, that when Jesus came into the world—that is, when he was born—he proceeded forth from the Father out of heaven. Hence, he learns, that before his incarnation, Jesus was in heaven with the Father; and the Scriptures enable him to trace backward the preexistence of the Son of God, from the days of the birth of John the Baptist, to those of Abraham; from the days of Abraham, to the period of the creation; and from the period of the creation, to an antecedent eternity. Was, then, this preexistent Messiah *a creature*, or did he subsist in the nature of God himself? A deliberate investigation on this subject leads to the following results: that the preexistent Messiah was "in the form of God," and "thought it not robbery to be equal" with the Father—that he is described in terms which are applicable only to the first Great Cause—that he was the "only-begotten" Son of God the Father—that he was the Word, whose attributes and operations were understood by the Jews to be those of Deity, i. e. of *Jehovah present with his people* —that by him all things were created, visible and invisible, in heaven and in earth—that he was the light and life of men, the spiritual Lord of the people of God, the Angel of the Covenant, in whom dwelt the name, character, and power, of Jehovah. On these multiplied evidences the inquirer is fully satisfied that the Messiah preexisted in the nature, not of man—not of any superior order of creatures—but of the Supreme Being himself.

He proceeds with the thread of the Messiah's history. The Word was made flesh; that is to say, he assumed the human nature. At the point, therefore, of his incarnation, he, who before was God only, became God and man. The narrative which the Gospels present to us, of the abode of the Messiah on earth, affords the plainest evidences that his humanity was real. He was nourished, he was tempted, he was inspired; he prayed, suffered, wept, and died. These and other coincident circumstances were the proper consequences of his having become invested with the

nature of man. But the deity of Christ can know no change. No wonder, therefore, that, during his mortal career, he is found to have claimed the character, displayed the powers, and accepted the homage, which appertain to JEHOVAH ALONE.

The Son of God broke the bands of death asunder; rose from the dead; ascended into that heaven where he was before; and, clothed in a glorified body, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. There, while as Mediator between God and man, and as still possessing the human nature, he is in all things, subject to the Father, he is nevertheless, described as exercising, by an invisible agency, a *divine* government, not only over his own church, but over all the creatures of God. He is declared to be the author of grace, and the bestower of every spiritual gift. He regulates the external circumstances of his church, and by his providence the universe *consists*. He is a legitimate object of prayer, praise, religious affiance, and complete mental devotion. Finally, in the last awful day of retribution, though he will still be found the sympathizing *friend and brother* of his unworthy followers; yet, (according to the records of inspired prophecy,) in raising the dead of all generations—in destroying or purifying with fire the visible world—in detecting the secrets of all hearts, and in dispensing eternal rewards and punishments—he will again display the characteristic attributes, and perform the acknowledged works, of JEHOVAH.

Such are the harmonious moral and practical evidences, derived from the past and future history of the Son of God, which convince our inquirer of the truth of the doctrine of his eternal divinity. But, on this essential subject, he finds himself in possession also of abundance of *direct* testimony. Do Christians still ask the question—Is Jesus Christ God? is he JEHOVAH? The sacred writers reply to that question with a clear and often repeated affirmative. They declare that he was in the beginning with God, and was God: John i. 1. They describe him as Jehovah, who laid the foundations of the earth; (Psalm cii. 25; *compare* Heb. i. 10;) Jehovah, who appeared to Isaiah in his

visions; (Isaiah vi.; *compare* John xii. 37—41;) Immanuel, born of the virgin, God with us; (Isaiah vii. 14; *compare* Matt. i. 22, 23;) the Mighty God; (Isa. ix. 6;) the LORD, appearing in his own temple; (Mal. iii. 1;) Jehovah, whose ways were prepared by the Baptist; (Isaiah xl. 3; Mal. iv. 5;) Jehovah sent by Jehovah to dwell among his people Israel; (Zech. ii. 10—13;) Jehovah, whom (when he was clothed with humanity) the Jews persecuted and pierced; (Zech. xii. 10;) the LORD and GOD of Thomas, the apostle; (John xx. 28, 29;) Jehovah, our righteousness; (Jer. xxiii. 6;) God anointed of God with the oil of gladness; (Psalm xlv. 1—7;) the true God and eternal life; (1 John v. 20;) both Christ and God; (Ephes. v. 5;) our great God and Saviour; (Tit. ii. 11—13;) OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER; (Rom. ix. 5.)

The result then of the inquirer's search after truth —the conclusion of his whole train of investigation, first, into the evidences of Christianity, and afterwards into several of the scriptural doctrines of which those evidences are the basis, is this—*that God was manifest in the flesh.* It is on the plainest principles of reason, and by a regular, unbroken, course of induction, that he has been carried forward to the admission of this stupendous *fact.* That fact is now the subject of his frequent and profound reflection. His mind is filled with this prodigious display of the love of our heavenly Father, and it is with irresistible force that the question arises in his soul—"For what purpose could the Son of God, who is one in the divine essence with the Father, and is, therefore, himself JEHOVAH, so marvellously humble himself, as to assume our frail and suffering nature, in that nature undergo every species of contumely, and finally die, like a malefactor, on the cross?" He has no difficulty in perceiving, that to suppose so vast a dispensation to have been directed to the mere purpose of communicating information, which might, with sufficient efficacy, have flowed through the medium of an inspired human agency, is to suppose a doctrine utterly repugnant to the known course of the

divine government over the world. He is well aware that there is an evenness in all the designs and operations of divine wisdom—a true, unfailing, and very generally perceptible, adaptation between the means and the end; and he therefore concludes, that the Son of God came into the world, and suffered, and died, as a man, to supply *all* our spiritual wants; not merely to illuminate our ignorance, but to bestow upon us the pardon of sins that are past, and deliverance from sin for the future—to save us from everlasting destruction, and to secure for us eternal happiness.

This conclusion he finds to be amply confirmed by the numerous *general* declarations of Scripture, that Jesus Christ came into the world to be the Saviour and Redeemer of sinners; but, as he pursues his course of scriptural inquiry on the redemption of the human race, the subject is gradually developed before him, and he is enabled to embrace a satisfactory view of its principal distinct features. These are the doctrines, first, of the atonement; secondly, of the imputed righteousness and advocacy of Jesus Christ; and, thirdly, of the Spirit. The result of his reflections, and of his examination of Scripture, on these points, may be described, in a few sentences, as follows :—

First. It is the principle of the moral government of God (a principle of immutable justice), that righteousness shall be rewarded, and sin punished. The analogy of that moral government, as far as it is subjected to our observation *here*, confirms the plain scriptural doctrine, that repentance *in itself* is not sufficient to avert the punishment of transgression. Something more was needed to demonstrate God's unalterable abhorrence of sin, and to reconcile his mercy with his justice. Now, God has himself bestowed upon us all that was required in order to the accomplishment of these ends. In the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son on the cross, he has provided a perfectly adequate atonement for the sins of mankind, in all ages; and *thus it is*, that the gate of Paradise is again thrown open, (on repentance,) to the whole human race. This great atonement was

foreordained before the foundation of the world; and from the earliest ages of it, until the death of Christ, and especially under the Jewish institution, it was typified and foreshown by the rite of animal sacrifice. It was also the subject of prophecy the most detailed and explicit; and, from the very numerous statements made on this fundamental doctrine by our Lord himself, and his apostles, as well as from the sacrificial phraseology in which those statements are couched, it plainly appears, that, as the Jews of old were saved from the temporal punishment of their ceremonial and other subordinate offences, and were restored to their civil and external religious privileges, *in consequence of their typical sacrifices*—so men of every name and nation may be delivered from the eternal penalty of sin, and may be restored to a real peace with God, and therefore to all true happiness, *in consequence of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ*—a voluntary offering, originating in the love of God and Christ towards the children of men.

Secondly. Nothing short of an absolute, uninterrupted, righteousness can possibly merit the reward of a joyful eternity. Our own righteousness is justly compared to "filthy rags." It has been defiled by inward impurity—it has been scattered and broken by multitudinous transgression. Our only claim on the heavenly inheritance, therefore, consists in this: that God is pleased to impute, to those who believe, the perfect righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ—who was "a lamb without blemish and without spot," and whose fulfilment of the whole law, sealed by his death, was infinitely meritorious in the Father's sight.

And, further, it appears, that although we are commanded not to sin, yet, "if any man sin, we have an *advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." In this respect, as in many others, he is the all-powerful Mediator between God and his people. At the right hand of the Father, he is ever engaged in our support and defence. He rebukes our accuser, he presents our prayers, he ever lives "to make intercession for us."

Thirdly. While the Christian may rejoice in the sacrifice, the merits, and the advocacy, of Jesus, he is always to remember that none of these points in religion interfere with the unalterable decree of a righteous God, that into his kingdom nothing "that defileth" can ever enter. Man, in order to be eternally happy, must be saved, not only from guilt, but from *sin*. He must be born again, changed, and sanctified. This essential work is begun and carried forward only through the operation of a divine and supernatural influence — the great promise of the Father under the Christian dispensation—the influence of the Spirit of God. This influence flows to mankind through the channel of Christ crucified. By his death on the cross, Jesus has procured for us the Spirit, and now freely bestows it on his people, for their help and salvation. The Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, is sent unto us from the Father by the Son; and, as it was his office to effect the incarnation, immeasurably to inspire the ministry, and to assist the atoning offering of the Messiah himself, so is he the cause of the new birth, in *the seed or children of the Messiah;* and ever dwells in true believers, to illuminate, guide, strengthen, and console them; and, above all, by the work of *sanctification*, and by the diffusion of divine love in their hearts, to prepare them for the purity, peace, and joyful unity, of the saints in bliss.

Such are the distinct, yet harmonious, features of the scheme which God has appointed for the redemption of man. Now, while, in the purposes to which its several parts are directed, our inquirer beholds a satisfactory reason for the incarnation and crucifixion of the SON OF GOD—while his heart is filled with gratitude towards the Father who ordained, towards the Son who conducts, and towards the Holy Spirit who consummates, the plan of mercy, he presses forwards to the consideration of another question—"What," he asks, "are those dispositions or principles of action in the human mind, by means of which I can *appropriate* these provisions of the love of God, and avail myself of the incomparable privileges offered to

me in the Gospel?" The Scriptures answer, FAITH and OBEDIENCE.

On these essential, practical points, the investigator of scriptural truth presently learns the following lessons. *First*, as to faith—that it is by faith the just man lives, and that, without it, we cannot please God—that our heavenly Father, having bestowed upon us such evidences as are sufficient to convince our reason that he exists, and, that he is the omnipotent moral governor of the world, abounding in goodness towards his creatures, requires that we should place on him the affiance of our souls, in order to our happiness here and hereafter—that such affiance is well pleasing in his sight, and is the means of procuring the forgiveness of our sins—that one indispensable part of it, in those to whom the word of God is revealed, is a belief in that word—that the fuller the revelation, the more extensive the belief required—that, under the dispensation of the Gospel, a right faith embraces all the essential doctrines of Christianity as its subjects; and the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, as its equal and inseparable objects—more especially, that as "God was IN CHRIST, reconciling the world to himself," the faith by which the Christian is saved is principally faith in the incarnate Son—that by simply relying on the Redeemer as the atonement for sin, and as "our righteousness," the ungodly are justified, without the deeds of the law—finally, that this justifying faith in Jesus is not the mere conviction of the understanding, but a divinely-implanted principle which works by love, and draws down on the believer the sanctifying graces of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, as to obedience—that the only standard of action enjoined on us in the Bible is obedience to the revealed will or law of God—that this obedience constitutes *righteousness*, and the contrary to it *sin*—that God has written his moral law on the hearts of all men; or, in other words, has interwoven a sense of it with their very nature—that, independently of this universal principle, he has, in all ages of the world, maintained for himself a visible church, consisting of persons who have received an external revelation

of his will—that, under the Mosaic dispensation, the moral law was specified and recorded in writing—that a vast variety of ceremonial and other positive precepts were also enjoined on the Israelites and their ancestors —that, whatsoever is the nature of the Lord's commandments, the duty universally required of those to whom they are addressed is, unqualified *obedience*—that such obedience must ever be grounded on *faith*, and that faith without it is absolutely dead—that under the dispensation of Christianity, the moral law of God is so far from being abrogated, that it is *fully* confirmed, and unfolded in all its strength and perfection—that the motives to obedience with which the Gospel furnishes us are of so powerful and exalted a nature, that they are practically adequate to the extent and purity of the service which such a law requires—and, lastly, that the aid of the Holy Spirit will never be withheld from those who seek it, but will enable them to bear the fruit of righteousness, and *to perfect holiness in the fear of God*.

Such, then, is the whole course of study and investigation pursued by our inquirer, in his search after divine truth. He reads the New Testament—he satisfies himself, first of its genuineness, and next, of its authenticity. By reflecting successively on the miracles of Jesus Christ and his apostles, on the prophecies which attest the truth of our religion, and on its internal evidences and actual moral effects, he becomes fully convinced that Christianity is the religion of God; and, on examination, he accedes, with equal satisfaction, to the position, that the Holy Scriptures which contain the record of Christianity were given by inspiration. On a careful perusal of the whole of that Sacred Volume, he is led to take a view, first, of the natural and moral attributes of the Supreme Being; secondly, of the personality and unity, in Him, of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; thirdly, of the history of the fallen angels, and particularly of the devices, character, and end, of Satan; fourthly, of the mortality, eternity, resurrection, moral agency, future prospects, and actual moral condition of man; fifthly, of the preexistence, incarnation, human life and death,

resurrection, ascension, and glorious reign, and especially of the unchanging *deity*, of Jesus Christ; sixthly, of the whole scheme of man's redemption, consisting principally, of justification and sanctification; and lastly, of the practical operation in men, of the two leading principles of religious action — faith and obedience.

May I venture to entertain the belief, that the gradually enlarged convictions, which we have thus supposed to have taken place in the mind of our inquirer, have become the convictions of the *Reader*; and, that he also has acceded, step by step, to all the successive essential points detailed in the general argument of the present volume? In the hope that such a belief is not unfounded, I trust I may be allowed to add a few words of persuasion and exhortation.

I would entreat him, in the first place, to cultivate an enlarged and abiding sense of the importance of eternal things—to bring home the truth, (unquestionable as it is, by any one who admits the divine authority of the sacred records) that the day is hastening upon him, when he shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; when all the secrets of his heart shall be brought to light; when he shall render to the Judge of all flesh an account of the deeds done in the body; and when he will either receive the boon of eternal happiness, or, under the weight of his own corruptions, sink down into never-ending woe. And, in the second place, I would implore his consideration of another truth, equally indubitable—that, in *that* day, it will only aggravate his condemnation, to have heard, understood, and approved, the word of the Lord, if he then shall be found to have persisted in refusing to follow its dictates.

The reader, I trust, like the supposed inquirer, has ascertained, to his satisfaction, that it is through faith and obedience alone that we can avail ourselves of the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, and become the heirs of a blessed immortality. I would therefore say to him—BELIEVE and OBEY. Thy understanding is convinced of the truth of our holy religion, but rest not in a mere notional faith. Lay aside the evil *heart*

of unbelief. Venture not to amuse thyself with mere speculation on the theory of Christianity, but lay firm hold of its *substance*, and flee from the wrath to come. Remember that thou art a sinner, unworthy of the love of God—wretched, and miserable, and blind, and poor, and naked. Confess thy transgressions unto the Lord; be broken down under a sense of them; and, well knowing that there is nothing in the fleeting scenes of this present life which can satisfy the aspirations of an immortal spirit, seek a sure refuge for a wounded and weary soul, in the bosom of Jesus. Cast thyself, just such as thou art, on the Mediator between God and man, "in whom are hid all the treasures," not only of "wisdom and knowledge," but of mercy, compassion, and love.

And, fear not to take his yoke upon thee. Obey the law of Christ, as it is written in Scripture, and as it is engraven on the heart. Follow the Lamb "*whithersoever* he goeth." Be not conformed to this world. "Be transformed, by the renewing" of thy mind, that thou mayest "prove what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable, will of God." Proceed with a firm, steady, determined, step, from grace to grace, from strength to strength, and from holiness to holiness. Resign thyself wholly to *him* who has bought thee with a price. Finally, watch unto prayer—pray without ceasing—pray, and faint not. Then, although the cross of Christ will, at times, be difficult to bear—although mockery and persecution will occasionally fall to thy lot—although thy own infirmities will often oppress thee—and, although in hours of comparative darkness, Satan will not fail to rage, to tempt, and to buffet, yet, fear not, for *God will be with thee.* The "Shepherd of Israel" will guide thee with the crook of his love. During the whole course of thy pilgrimage he will be thy friend, companion, and protector. He will pour forth his Spirit upon thee. He will scatter all thine enemies. For "mourning," he will bestow "the oil of joy;" for "ashes," "beauty;" for "the spirit of heaviness," "the garment of praise;" for distress and conflict, the "*peace of God which passeth all understanding.*" And, in the end, (if thy

faith shall have kept pace with knowledge, and thy virtue with faith) he will administer unto thee, through the blood of his covenant, a *sure* and *abundant* entrance into the mansions of rest and glory.

And now, in taking leave of the reader, I request his attention, in conclusion, to a very few general observations. He can scarcely fail to have remarked, in the first place, that of the whole system of religious truth, which we have now been engaged in contemplating, the turning point—the essential hinge—is the *divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.* For my own part, I freely confess, that the more intimately I examine the constituent parts of scriptural religion, and the longer I make them the subject of reflection, the more strongly am I brought to feel the importance of a simple reliance on the truth of that doctrine.

Allow, that Jesus Christ, who came into the world, took our nature upon him, and, in that nature, died on the cross to save us, was JEHOVAH himself—and the mind is insensibly prepared to embrace a just, comprehensive, view, both of our *loss* by nature, and of our *gain* by redemption. We are then, from the whole bearing and analogy of the case, almost inevitably led to entertain an adequate apprehension of the desperate nature of sin, and of the merited weight of its everlasting consequences. Then, also, are we brought to perceive, that Jesus is an all-sufficient Redeemer—that his blood, shed on the cross, was an ample price paid for the deliverance and eternal welfare of the whole human race; and that, by his Spirit, he is able so to illuminate, regenerate, and sanctify, the children of men, as to render them fit for the happiness of heaven.

But, deny the real divinity of Jesus Christ, and the consequence is this—that our sense of our *loss* on the one hand, and of our *gain* on the other, is immediately weakened. Our views of the corruption and guilt of man—of our own sinfulness, and of its future consequences—become inadequate and obscure. Our conviction of the saving efficacy of the one great sacrifice is softened down, and gradually explained away; and our dependence upon the spiritual influ-

ence of the great Head of the church is effectually *undermined*. Reason and experience unite in proclaiming, that such are the effects of our degrading the Son of God to the rank of a mere *creature*; and the lower we degrade him in the scale of creation, the more conspicuous do these effects become. The disciple of Arius, whose unscriptural system imports (*in* point of fact) that Jesus Christ was a *god*, and yet a creature only, and not *Jehovah*, retains some considerable degree of attachment to the doctrines of the fall and redemption of man; but, that attachment can never be full and decided, because the foundation of such a faith is *not* the ROCK OF AGES. Socinus and his followers, who look upon Jesus as a *mere man*, but invest his humanity with powers far superior to those which really appertain to our nature, embrace in their religious views some faint traces of his *divine government*. The yet more modern freethinker, who hesitates not to declare his opinion, that Jesus, *the man of Nazareth*, although a person of great virtue and endowments, was nevertheless, nothing more by nature than such a man as the freethinker himself—has no difficulty in *discarding*, and at times can even *deride*, the doctrine of human corruption—the doctrine of diabolical agency—the doctrine of eternal punishment—the doctrine of reconciliation with the Father, through the atoning blood of Christ—the doctrine of the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit.

These observations are offered, not in the spirit of polemical severity, but from a firm, unalterable, conviction of their justice and importance. To conceal the truth on such subjects is no true charity;—it is not doing to others, as we would that they should do unto us. As there is an infinite difference between the Supreme Being and all the works of his hands, so it is plain that there is an infinite difference of *opinion* between those who believe that Jesus Christ is GOD and those who regard him only as a *creature*. It is a difference which admits of no compromise—a difference pregnant with vast consequences—a difference which Christian love may lead us to *deplore*,

but never (according to my apprehension) to disregard or forget.

But, to reverse the picture, how numerous, how powerful, are those doctrinal points in religion, which are entertained in common by the great majority of the Christian world! One principal object which, in the laborious yet interesting task of composing the present volume, I have always kept in view, has been to develop these *points of union*. I have desired to show to my fellow-believers in the divinity of Jesus Christ—Roman Catholics, as well as Protestants—Calvinists, as well as Arminians—dissenters, as well as members of the various established churches—the strength, the breadth, and the saving efficacy, of those great features of Divine Truth, in which they all agree. May this main agreement—an agreement which embraces every thing *absolutely essential* in religion—be more and more accompanied by gentleness, kindness, forbearance, and candour, and, above all, by the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!"

Finally, I would remark, that of this unity of the Spirit, founded as it is on an essential unity of doctrine, one principal result ought surely to be, our joint and common, or at least our *corresponding* and *harmonious*, efforts to promote the salvation of the world.

If we are taught of God to mourn over our own sins, we shall mourn also over the sins of mankind. We shall be humbled before the Lord, in deep sorrow of heart, when we reflect on the forgetfulness of their Creator, the falsehood, lasciviousness, malice, cruelty, bloodshed, and idolatry, which are still so fearfully prevalent among the sons of Adam. But, every one who is brought to a right understanding of the Gospel of Christ, knows that in its doctrines, as they are humbly accepted, and practically applied, there is a powerful, remedial, principle, by which moral evil of every description may be counteracted and subdued. Let us then pray for the hastening of that day, when the dominion of Jesus shall extend "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth;" (Ps. lxxii. 8) for, under its influence, a mighty change shall still be wrought in the character and condition of men.

"They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more:" Isa. ii. 4. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling, together, and a little child shall lead them.... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain (saith the Lord;) for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea:" Isa. xi. 6—9. *Then shall this moral wilderness become a fruitful field.* "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice, even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God..... And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away:" Isa. xxxv. 1, 2, 8—10.

THE END.

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